

# **Hanging out with young people, urban spaces and ideas**

Openings to dwelling, participation and thinking

Helsinki 2015



Department of Teacher Education  
University of Helsinki

# **Hanging out with young people, urban spaces and ideas**

Openings to dwelling, participation and thinking

**Noora Pyry**

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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## **Abstract**

In this thesis, the key themes of 1) *knowing*, and 2) *participation* are examined in relation to creative and meaningful practical engagement with one's everyday surroundings, i.e. 'dwelling with' the world. These themes are explored both within the research process and in the context of young people's, and particularly teenage girls' hanging out. This research is inspired by the Situationist practice of *dérive*, and draws from participatory research tradition, posthuman feminist thinking, and non-representational theorization. 'Dwelling with' is approached with an acknowledgement of the capacity of the material world to produce effects in human bodies: things and spaces thus take part in — the seemingly trivial, but often highly affectual — everyday encounters that make dwelling with possible. Ergo, also 'data' is approached in a new way. The power of words and other representations is not ignored, but they are taken as 'doings': they are performative. Representations are thus not evidence of a separate reality that lies behind them. In the thesis, attention is placed on the creative potential of *experimentation*.

Fieldwork for this thesis happened in three phases. The first one in 2011 was a pilot study conducted in Helsinki in connection to a 9th grade geography course (participants were 15 to 16 years). The second phase took place in San Francisco in 2012 and was conducted via school, but separately from schoolwork. The participants in this study were 7th graders (12 to 13 years). The third phase in 2013 took place in Helsinki, again as part of a 9th grade geography course (participants 15 to 16 years).

First, the thesis explores how participatory methods can be used to support young people's role as *co-researchers*, foster their engagement in the research process and carve space for alternative knowledges. Together with the playful topic of hanging out, these methods can cultivate a relaxed atmosphere in research situations. This is especially important when working in the school context. The methods also help balance power relations and address topics that could otherwise be left unnoticed.

Second, the thesis shows how photography can be used as a method for multisensory 'thinking with' the world. This creative method is connected to movement in *photo-walks*. This practice is argued to foster young people's engagement with their everyday surroundings, and the research process, by linking action and understanding. This engagement opens up possibilities for spatial-embodied reflection. Later, the photographs serve as fieldnotes that take part in the thinking process and inspire action in the form of

reflection in *photo-talks*. In this thesis, photographs are not considered as data of 'what was there', rather they are understood to have productive power in the research process.

Third, the thesis introduces the concept of *hanging out -knowing*. This knowing becomes possible through dwelling with: it takes place in everyday encounters. Hanging out -knowing is non-instrumental multisensory reflection about one's place in the world. Because hanging out is playful and wonderfully purposeless, space is cleared for the inspiring experience of enchantment. In these moments of being moved by something, new reflection can emerge. The moment of enchantment is always accidental, but it can be cultivated by artistic methods, such as photo-walking.

Finally, the thesis argues that by hanging out at a shopping mall teenage girls participate in the world. Because hanging out lacks rigid plans, moments of enchantment become possible. This openness towards the world fosters dwelling with one's surroundings, in this case the shopping mall. By hanging out, girls disturb the rhythm of consumption. Improvisation with things and spaces produces a micro-atmosphere of play that interferes with the atmosphere of consumption at the mall. Through *participation by being*, and by actively marking and claiming spaces as theirs, girls create momentary 'hangout homes' for themselves. Hanging out produces alternative modes of engagement with the city. Creative experimentation cultivates lively and mixed-use public spaces, and adds to making urban life vibrant and thought-provoking.

**Keywords:** Affect, dwelling with, enchantment, geographies of hanging out, hanging out -knowing, non-representational theory, participation, young people

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Noora Pyyry  
Hengailua nuorten, kaupunkitilojen ja ideoiden kanssa:  
Avauksia asumiseen, osallistumiseen ja ajatteluun

## Tiivistelmä

Tämä väitöskirja tarkastelee 1) *tietämistä* ja 2) *osallistumista* suhteessa luovaan ja merkitykselliseen olemiseen arjen kaupunkitiloissa. Näitä teemoja tutkitaan 'kanssa-asumisen' (*dwelling with*) käsitteen kautta ja niitä lähestytään sekä suhteessa tutkimuksen tekemiseen että nuorten hengailuun kaupungilla. Tutkimus linkittyy osallistavan tutkimusperinteen ja posthumanistisen feministisen ajattelun kenttään, ja ammentaa erityisesti keskustelusta, jota on käyty 'Non-representationaalisen teorian' (*Non-representational theory*, NRT) ympärillä. Taustalla vaikuttaa myös Kansainvälisten situationistien ajatus kaupungista leikkikenttänä, jota voidaan tutkia toiminnallisesti vaeltelemalla (*dérive*-menetelmä) – tavallaan hengailemalla.

Kanssa-asumisen käsitettä avataan huomioimalla materiaalisen maailman kyky vaikuttaa ihmiskehoihin: asiat ja tilat osallistuvat arjen kohtaamisiin, joissa asuminen kehkeytyy. Tytöt eivät siis hengaile kaupunkitilassa, vaan yhdessä tilojen kanssa. Myös aineistoa lähestytään tästä näkökulmasta. Sanojen ja muiden representaatioiden voima tunnustetaan, mutta ne ymmärretään tekoina eikä niinkään todisteina todellisuudesta 'niiden takana'. Koska arjen toiminta tapahtuu affektuaalisella tasolla usein ilman sen suurempaa pohdintaa, tutkimus pyrkii tavoittamaan tunnetiloja ihmisten ja ympäristön välillä. Samalla tutkimus pyrkii avaamaan uusia näkökulmia urbaaniin kanssa-asumiseen.

Kenttätutkimus jakautui kolmeen vaiheeseen. Ensimmäinen vaihe toteutettiin Helsingissä vuonna 2011 osana 9. luokan maantieteen opetusta (osallistujat olivat 15–16-vuotiaita), toinen San Franciscossa vuonna 2012 paikallisen koulun kautta 7-luokkalaisten tyttöjen kanssa (osallistujat 12–13-vuotiaita), mutta erillään opetuksesta, ja kolmas Helsingissä osana 9. luokan maantiedon kurssia (osallistujat 15–16-vuotiaita).

Väitös tarkastelee osallistavia menetelmiä ja niiden mahdollisuuksia tukea nuorten *kanssatutkijuutta* heitä koskevassa tutkimuksessa. Yhdessä osallistavien menetelmien kanssa hengailu aiheena loi rennon tunnelman tutkimustilanteisiin ja tuki nuorten osallisuutta tutkimusprosessissa. Käytetyt menetelmät tekivät tilaa vaihtoehtoiselle tietämiselle/tiedolle ja muutoin helposti huomiotta jääville aiheille.

Tutkimuksessa valokuvaamista tarkastellaan moniaistillisena tapahtumana, jossa kuvan ottamiseen vaikuttaa samanaikaisesti moni asia. Valokuvaaminen keskittää aistit arjen ohikiitäviin asioihin ja ajattelu tapahtuu yhdessä kaupunkitilojen kanssa, kun tavalliset asiat näyttäytyvät yllättävinä, outoina tai erilaisina. Nuoret kuvasivat hengailuun liittyviä kaupunkitiloja valokuvakävelyillä (*photo-walks*). Valokuvaamisen liikkeessä voidaan nähdä

olevan tilallis-kehollista reflektiota, joka edistää luovan kaupunkisuhteen rakentumista: ajattelu siis tapahtuu kohtaamisissa maailman kanssa. Se myös vahvistaa kuvaajan osallisuutta tutkimuksessa. Vaikka valokuvia ei käsitelty aineistona, ne ottivat osaa tutkimukseen valokuvajutteluissa (*photo-talks*) ja vaikuttivat prosessin kulkuun. Osallistujat saivat valokuvien avulla myös tuoda esiin itselleen tärkeitä asioita.

Väitös esittelee *hengailutietämisen* käsitteen (*hanging out -knowing*). Koska hengailu on lähtökohtaisesti päämäärätöntä ja leikillistä, se mahdollistaa maailman ihmettelyn ja siitä haltioitumisen (*enchantment*). Hengailutietäminen on moniaistillista reflektiota omasta paikasta maailmassa ja se mahdollistuu kanssa-asumalla. Valokuvakävelyt voivat syventää tätä tietämistä luomalla haltioitumisen hetkiä. Hengailutietämisen toiminnallisuus ja tilallis-kehollisuus tekevät sen sanallisesta kuvaamisesta vaikeaa.

Lopuksi väitös esittää, että teinityttöjen hengailu kauppakeskuksessa on tärkeää ja merkityksellistä *osallistumista* urbaaniin elämään. Hengailun päämäärättömyys avaa mahdollisuuksia haltioitumisen hetkiin. Tämä avoimuus maailmalle syventää kanssa-asumista ja tekee tilaa improvisaatioille kaupunkitilassa. Hengaillessaan kauppakeskuksessa tytöt häiritsevät kaupallisuuden ilmapiiriä ja rytmiä, ja luovat hetkellisiä leikillisyyden tiloja. Tytöt valtaavat tilaa omakseen ja rakentavat väliaikaisia 'hengailukoteja' (*hangout homes*). Hengailu ottaa näin osaa elävän ja moninaisen kaupunkitilan tuottamiseen, ja avaa mahdollisuuksia *toisin olemiselle* – jopa näissä normatiivisissa kaupallisissa tiloissa.

**Avainsanat:** affekti, haltioituminen, hengailun maantiede, hengailutietäminen, kanssa-asuminen, non-representationaalinen teoria, nuoret, osallistuminen



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As this thesis argues, thinking emerges in encounters. In addition to the fieldwork events, there are formative academic encounters that have taken my thinking further. Professor Sirpa Tani needs to be mentioned first. Sirpa, your fidelity, intellect and warmth are exceptional. I am proud to have been working with you, and I know we will go on thinking, feeling and wondering about life together. I also owe much to my 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisor, Docent Tarja Tolonen, who opened up the secrets of doing fieldwork with young people when I was just starting this research. It has been my distinct privilege to work as part of the project *Dwelling with the City — Children and young people as participating residents*, led by Professor Tani (other researchers Docent Pauliina Rautio and MSc Reetta Hyvärinen) and funded by the Academy of Finland (project number 255432). This has given me the opportunity to concentrate on doing research for four full years.

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# Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	1
1.1 The start of a research process	1
1.2 A desire to know, i.e. the research questions	3
1.3 Geographies of hanging out	7
1.3.1 Hanging out is young people's play	7
1.3.2 Commercialization of public space and young people's lives: Bubble-wrapped or planned out?	9
1.3.3 Hanging out: Openings for being differently?	12
1.4 Approaching urban everyday life: Inspiration from the Situationist practice	14
<b>2 The journey of doing participatory youth research</b>	17
2.1 The framework: PAR, posthuman feminist thinking and NRT	17
2.1.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)	18
2.1.2 Posthuman feminist thinking	21
2.1.3 Non-representational theory (NRT)	25
2.2 Fieldwork	31
2.2.1 Helsinki, 2011	31
2.2.2 San Francisco, 2012	34
2.2.3 Helsinki, 2013	37
2.3 Methods explored along the way	39
2.3.1 My <i>dérives</i> : Photo-walks in Helsinki and San Francisco	40
2.3.2 Photo-talks: Encounters with the material	45
2.3.3 Mental mapping	51
2.3.4 The 'outcome': Data as evidence or something else?	54

<b>3 Hanging out -knowing.....</b>	<b>59</b>
3.1 A shift: Learning as a more-than-human issue .....	59
3.2 Learning with the city: Tapping into hanging out -knowing.....	61
<b>4 Hanging out is participation .....</b>	<b>65</b>
4.1 Dwelling with the shopping mall: Creating ‘hangout homes’ .....	65
4.2 Hanging out as marking and claiming: Building <i>our</i> places .....	67
<b>5 Reflections.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>77</b>

# List of original publications

This thesis consists of a summary and the following publications:

- I Pyyry, N. (2012). Nuorten osallisuus tutkimuksessa: Menetelmällisiä kysymyksiä ja vastausyrityksiä. *Nuorisotutkimus* 30(1), 35–53. (Translation: ‘Youth participation in research: Methodical questions and tentative answers’.)
- II Pyyry, N. (2015). ‘Sensing with’ photography and ‘thinking with’ photographs in research into teenage girls’ hanging out. *Children’s Geographies* 13(2), 149–163.
- III Pyyry, N. (2014). Learning with the city via enchantment: photowalks as creative encounters. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. DOI:10.1080/01596306.2014.929841
- IV Pyyry, N. Participation by being: Teenage girls’ hanging out at the shopping mall as ‘dwelling with’ [the world]. (Submitted to *Emotion, Space and Society*.)

The publications are referred to in the text by their roman numerals.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The start of a research process

‘What makes me think?’ Rosalyn Diprose (2002, 125) turns to Nietzsche to attend to this question and makes the important connection between affectivity and thinking. She describes: ‘Something gets under my skin. Something disturbs me, makes me think in a direction that may not be altogether different from what I thought initially, but different all the same.’ This quote resonates with what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1991/1994, 139) refer to as a *force* that can only be sensed, an encounter with something that makes one look at the world differently. This is how I *feel* about thinking [pun intended]. And ultimately, this PhD has been a quest to understand how knowing and thinking take place in everyday action. Something happens in life, something that forces one to think and *be differently*, to find an alternative direction.

A single, clean-cut starting point to a process is often difficult to locate and rarely there is one, since life is, well, live. There are always multiple things affecting the taking-place of any event. But when I started to write a seminar paper for my pedagogical studies on young people’s hanging out in Helsinki in 2005, there was already something that was bothering me. This ‘something’ was a *feeling* that the world is in a rush; that people are in a constant hurry to get somewhere. From a very young age, I have felt that my rhythm of doing many things is too slow. I have felt a strong need to stop in a world of constant sensory stimulation, a need to claim time and space to just be and wonder. So, even if as a teenager, I did not hang out much with the local youth in my neighborhood, taking time to just be together without specific goals resonates with how I approach life. In addition to deeply valuing the time I spend with my friends, I am also curious about the seemingly insignificant everyday things that eventually make life feel meaningful. On that account, it was not difficult to come up with a topic for the seminar paper in 2005.

There was also something else that I can remember giving me a push to study hanging out. When traveling in London and strolling through a bookshop, I bumped into something interesting. This was a book called *Cool places: Geographies of youth cultures*, edited by Tracey Skelton and Gill Valentine (1998). It is a fascinating collection of articles exploring diverse topics that have to do with young people’s lives. This encounter was truly an inspiring one and it gave me the confidence to start thinking about hanging out as a ‘serious’ academic topic. I was lucky enough to work under the guid-

ance of Professor Sirpa Tani, who immediately understood why I was interested in this non-instrumental, messy, chaotic and seemingly not so important everyday phenomenon. A few years later, she became my supervisor in this PhD process, which in many ways mirrors the experience of hanging out, since in its ongoingness, it has taken me to directions I could not have predicted or determined in advance. And why should I have? Changes in directions have been important, since these were often moments when I was forced to think, especially when the process felt overwhelmingly arduous. The research has progressed in connection to the world, together with it, and new questions have emerged in the process. Above all, then, this PhD is a story of encounters and as such, a journey of thought, which still goes on here as I am reflecting on it. The writing process itself has been, perhaps paradoxically, central in thinking about the everyday things that matter greatly but cannot fully be verbalized. This process has been a wonderful, *rhizomatic* (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987) mess, where young people, books, articles, discussions, my past and the two cities where I have done fieldwork, Helsinki and San Francisco, have all taken part in the research.

On that account, I need to mention my love for cities. Although I enjoy 'slow life' and feel that wondering about the world requires both time and space, I get thrilled with the turbulence of urban life: the unexpected encounters, the sounds, the scents, the visual, all of it. I feel at home under the neon lights. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift (2002, 157) portray the city as 'an agitation of thought and practice'. By this they refer to the countless possibilities for improvisations that the city provides, to the surprises that may push one to think in a new way. The potential for playfulness in urban life is also something that Henri Lefebvre emphasized when he talked about the replacement of the capitalist society by a 'ludic society' (Stanek 2011, 220). He referred to the appreciation for a sense of adventure, exploration, cooperation and (mass) creativity; and dreamed of cities that would be open for transformation, instead of having them planned with rigid divisions to functional areas. The idea behind was that the city shapes its residents as much as they shape the city. Then, a city that would be open to hanging out would also create more opportunities for playfulness and lively urban culture to all people. This means that by looking at the practices of hanging out in a city, a lot can be said about the city itself. My interest in hanging out hence entails a passion to promote for diverse and lively cities.

This study has been conducted in two urban areas of different scale and context: Helsinki and San Francisco. I have lived in Helsinki for most of my adult life and feel deeply connected to the city. Helsinki has played a part in many meaningful life events and only one city in the world can really compete with my attachment to it. The affective power of San Francisco is



unspeakable: this has much to do with its physical geography, but even more with the energy and vibrancy of its urban life. I moved to the city at the beginning of 2006, spent nearly three eventful years there — and came back to Helsinki with two babies. Once I was out of the diaper circus and decided to do the PhD, it was clear to me that I wanted to do research both in San Francisco and Helsinki. So, the journey began.

## **1.2 A desire to know, i.e. the research questions**

When writing the research plan, my intention was to do research with teenage girls, but somewhere along the way there were boys who took part in it, too. This happened because in Helsinki I conducted the pilot study as part of schoolwork (article I). When I found myself standing in front of a classroom talking about my research, it felt awkward and artificial to limit my interest only to the girls' hanging out. The same happened in the third fieldwork phase in Helsinki (article III). So, I ended up improvising and included all the young people there to the project, but worked with some volunteer participants more closely (eight girls in the Helsinki pilot study, ten girls in San Francisco, and ten girls again in Helsinki). Notwithstanding, I started my work with the following (preliminary) research questions:

1. *How do teenage girls use, produce and appropriate urban space?*
2. *How do girls negotiate the implied boundaries between public and private spaces?*
3. *How do their hanging out practices reflect their position(s) in society?*
4. *How could hanging out be reflected on within school geography?*

As usually happens, the research questions and interests changed along the way. And this is fine, since it is impossible — and not fruitful — to hold on to the same questions and beliefs throughout the process. In order to better understand the world, there needs to be flexibility within the research plan and practice. After conducting the pilot study in Helsinki (2011) and immersing myself with the literature connected to the geographies of hanging out, and more, I gradually focused the attention more specifically to two wide-ranging questions that had been forming in the back of my mind:

## The leading research questions

1. *How does knowing take place in everyday practice with urban spaces?*
2. *What is participation in the context of hanging out?*

In the framework of this study, I started to ponder upon the first question both in relation to methodological concerns and to learning/knowing while hanging out. I wanted to find out how to better understand hanging out, and through this, human involvement with the world. The first question is connected to the second one, because it entails a need to look into what participation and rights are in the context of hanging out. Both questions can be opened up by exploring the concept of *dwelling with* which refers to creative and meaningful practical engagements with one's everyday surroundings (Ingold 2000). This concept is approached with an acknowledgement of the capacity of the material world to produce effects in human bodies: things and spaces thus take part in — the seemingly trivial, but often deeply affectual — everyday encounters that make dwelling with possible. In this thesis, the key themes of 1) *knowing* and 2) *participation* are probed in relation to this meaningful engagement, dwelling with, both within the research process and in the context of young people's, and particularly teenage girls' hanging out.

This PhD thesis is a compilation of four articles (listed at the beginning). As stated, I am curious about how to study everyday experiences and, through this, to better understand our involvement with the world. As follows, the first two articles are methodological explorations into the world of hanging out. The first one, *Youth participation in research: Methodical questions and tentative answers*, is a discussion of youth participation in research. Informed by feminist and participatory research practice, I present some methods that can be used to foster participation and to understand the everyday experiences that have to do with teenage girls' hanging out. This article is clearly different from the three others in style and thinking. This is partly due to the fact that I translated it from Finnish, in which the entire way of writing and formulating thoughts is distinctly different from English. This was not an easy task and I am afraid that the paper suffered from being forced to a different (language) structure. Still, mostly the change has to do with my engagement with posthuman and non-representational theorization. In the second article, *'Sensing with' photography and 'thinking with' photographs in research into teenage girls' hanging out*, I focus on photography and the ways in which the practice of 'photo-walking' can open up multisensory reflection in encounters with the city. I also discuss 'photo-

talks' during which thinking happens with the photographs taken during the walks.

By looking back at these two articles and by introducing my theoretical framework, I will open up the shift in thinking that took place somewhere along the way due to encounters with teenagers, the two cities, good papers, books and so on. One particular book needs to be mentioned here: *Taking-place: Non-representational theories and geography* (Anderson & Harrison, eds. 2010). I read this exceptional collection of writings during my fieldwork phase in San Francisco in 2012; I read the book in cafés, while walking in the city (yes, I bumped into a tree), in bed — I could not leave the discussion that deeply resonated with the process of doing participatory fieldwork that I was then immersed in. Non-representational theorization seemed to challenge some fundamental rules of doing research and, at the same time, I felt it was somehow able to touch what truly matters in life. I was fascinated with the relational understanding of everyday geographies as (often momentary and fleeting) performative practices and started to evaluate my methods and ways of doing research while further exploring non-representational thinking. Another collection of writings that directed my thinking away from representationalism was *Material feminisms* (Alaimo & Hekman, eds. 2008). This book makes a strong case in arguing that we need a 'new ontology' in feminist thinking, one that bridges the pervasive gap between the real and the discursive. The last, but not the least important book to mention here is Jane Bennett's (2001) *The enchantment of modern life: Attachments, crossings, and ethics*, where she shows that genuine wonder can be experienced in the most surprising everyday situations. She also convincingly argues that the feeling of wonder is a key to ethical being-in-the-world. These books have guided me to many other writings and interesting discussions within posthuman theorization.

The decisive step away from the epistemological/ontological separation connects the second article to the third one, *Learning with the city via enchantment: photo-walks as creative encounters*, in which I approach knowing/thinking/learning as an ongoing process that takes place in mundane encounters with the city. In the fourth article, *Participation by being: Teenage girls' hanging out at the shopping mall as 'dwelling with' [the world]*, I investigate similar themes, but focus on participation and rights by looking at the meaningful engagements that teenage girls form with commercial spaces while hanging out, i.e. how they 'dwell with' these spaces. Before starting the story of my methodological journey, I will briefly present a background (section 1.3) against which I have reflected on my thinking and doing research on young people's and particularly teenage girls' hanging out. As two of the articles are methodological ones, and the third deals with learning that happens with the creative method of photo-walking, this thesis

does not focus on hanging out — rather, hanging out informs all the articles as a non-instrumental way of being-in-the-world. The key concepts and arguments of the four articles are as follows:

**Article I:** *Youth participation in research: Methodical questions and tentative answers*

**Key concepts:** co-researching, hanging out, participation, participatory methods

**Arguments:** Participatory methods can support young people's role as co-researchers, foster their engagement in the research process and carve space for alternative knowledges. Together with the topic of hanging out, the methods in this pilot study helped to create a relaxed atmosphere in the research situations and in addressing topics that could have otherwise been easily ignored. Careful consideration of power relations and research ethics is needed in order to successfully listen to young people, especially when the research is conducted in the school context.

**Article II:** *'Sensing with' photography and 'thinking with' photographs in research into teenage girls' hanging out*

**Key concepts:** dwelling with, hanging out, sensing with, thinking with

**Arguments:** Photography can be used as a method for multisensory *thinking with* the world. When this creative method is connected to movement without clear destination, i.e. in the photo-walks, the practice can further deepen the participant's engagement with her surroundings, and the research process, by linking action and understanding. It hence fosters 'dwelling with'. In the photo-talks, photographs serve as fieldnotes that take part in the thinking process and inspire action in the form of reflection. Here, a photograph is not considered as data of 'what was there', rather it is understood to be performative in itself.

**Article III:** *Learning with the city via enchantment: Photo-walks as creative encounters*

**Key concepts:** dwelling with, enchantment, hanging out -knowing, learning with, play

**Arguments:** *Hanging out -knowing* is non-instrumental multisensory reflection about one's place in the world that takes place in everyday encounters: it becomes possible through 'dwelling with'. Because hanging out is playful and wonderfully purposeless, space is cleared for the inspiring

experience of enchantment. In these moments of being moved by something, new reflection can emerge. Moments of enchantment are accidental, but they can be cultivated by artistic methods, such as photo-walking.

**Article IV:** *Participation by being: Teenage girls' hanging out at the shopping mall as 'dwelling with' [the world]*

**Key concepts:** dwelling with, enchantment, hanging out, participation, play

**Arguments:** Because hanging out lacks rigid plans, space is made for the inspiring experience of enchantment. This openness and receptivity towards the world fosters dwelling with one's surroundings, in this case the shopping mall. By hanging out, the girls disturb the rhythm of appropriate movement. Improvisation with things and spaces produces a micro-atmosphere of play that interferes with the atmosphere of consumption at the mall. Through *participation by being* and by actively marking and claiming spaces as *theirs*, girls create momentary 'hangout homes' for themselves.

## 1.3 Geographies of hanging out

### 1.3.1 Hanging out is young people's play

'Geographies of hanging out' refers to research on young people's ways of spending their free time in public spaces with their peers without tight schedules or parental supervision (Pyry & Tani, forthcoming). Hanging out is interesting because it seems to work against what we are taught to do in the name of progress: be purposive, goal-oriented and 'just do it'! Hanging out implicitly critiques this thinking. While hanging out, young people escape the seriousness of the adult world. Hanging out is a playful event, during which young people are generally open to improvisation and changes of plans. As Zygmunt Bauman (1993, 171) writes: "to play is to rehearse eternity... Nothing accrues, nothing 'builds up', each new play is an absolute beginning." Seen from this perspective, play is an end in itself, a fundamental part of being a human. Although children's play is cherished in the Western culture(s) (often because it is considered important for learning and individual development), young people's play, especially in the form of hanging out, is usually viewed as unacceptable 'loitering'. Teenagers are perceived as 'adults-in-becoming' and, as such, are expected to use even their 'free' time for something productive. Simple play is usually understood as opposite to the behavior of adults, since it lacks clear goals (e.g. Stevens 2007). Play, and hanging out, critiques the idea of always having to be

productive; it is improvisation that often involves random encounters with strangers.

Playfulness and improvisation in hanging out is especially important, since young people's lives today are usually highly scheduled and organized around family life, school, and organized hobbies. Teenagers spend most of their time in activities that are planned and supervised by other people, usually adults. Their free time and chances for independent mobility are often very limited. Lia Karsten (2005) has coined the term 'backseat generation' for today's children and young people who are driven by car from one supervised activity to another. Various reasons for the decreasing of young people's independent mobility in Western countries have been identified, among them, the privatization and commercialization of public spaces (e.g. Low & Smith 2006; Mitchell 2003; Staeheli & Mitchell 2008); the (actual or perceived) threat of crime and violence (e.g. Johansson et al. 2012; Koskela 2009; Pain & Smith 2008); and as a result of these, the increased regulation and parental concern (e.g. Childress 2004; Harris 2004; Katz 2006; O'Brien et al. 2000).

When hanging out in the city, young people carve out space and time for themselves. Already the study for my seminar paper about young people's hanging out in Helsinki brought to my attention very small and transitory everyday things and situations that seemed important to the young people involved (Pyyry 2005). These things, places and events were valuable because they were *theirs*, usually hidden from the adult gaze. The young people involved in the study also spent time at youth centres and other spaces appointed for their use, but hanging out without adult monitoring clearly seemed to be especially treasured, wherever it took place. Young people gathered together at garages, garbage sheds or abandoned houses to 'do nothing' and created what Mats Lieberg (1995), and later Hugh Matthews et al. (2000), have referred to as 'back stages'. Lieberg applied Erving Goffman's (1963) metaphor of a theater, to describe how people in the city could be understood as actors on stage and back stage of a play. While hanging out and being 'back stage' from the adult gaze, young people are very much 'on stage' for their peers. Hanging out with friends is important because it is the rare time when young people can simply be together without fixed plans. While hanging out, young people are generally open to encounters with new things, people and places. Hanging out can be understood as playful involvement with the city. Just as skateboarders or parkour practitioners use space creatively (Ameel & Tani 2012), groups of young people are imaginative in figuring out ways to carve out space away from the adult gaze. By these playful everyday practices they make the city their playground (article III). I will talk more about playfulness in hanging out and the openings it can create for meaningful engagement with everyday spaces in chapters 3 and 4.

### 1.3.2 Commercialization of public space and young people's lives: Bubble-wrapped or planned out?

A dialogue with my 5-year-old daughter at the Kamppi shopping mall in Helsinki, 2014:

*A: Mom, can we go shopping?*

*N: Well, what did you have in mind?*

*A: I don't know. Let's just buy SOMETHING!*

In 1992, Crawford already stated that the ethos of consumption occupies every sphere of life. Young people are objects of global market forces, they are directly and heavily advertised to, and are becoming important economic actors. Stuart C. Aitken (2001, 150) points out that even a simple thing like throwing a child's birthday party has become a huge commercial feast in Western societies, increasingly being contracted out to global businesses (such as McDonald's). At a very young age children are often already competitive consumers. This puts children from different social backgrounds at very different starting points and also creates segmented urban spaces. In an early study on hanging out at a shopping mall in Los Angeles, it was shown that young people did not necessarily use much money although they spent their time at the mall (Anthony 1985). Hanging out is thus not all about consumption, it is most of all a social event. Still, whether or not young people actually buy anything while hanging out, the *atmosphere of consumption* (article IV) that surrounds them is powerfully effective, as also the quote in the beginning of this section suggests.

No matter how much fun, hanging out in a garbage shed can quickly get chilly in Finland. A shopping mall offers an air-conditioned environment throughout the year: this is one of the reasons why the popular Kamppi shopping mall in downtown Helsinki is commonly known as 'the biggest youth center' in Finland (Kuusisto-Arponen & Tani 2009). Weather frames the spare time opportunities of young people, but also tightened notions of safety affect the geographies hanging out. 'Security' has become a trendy word in Western countries (e.g. Koskela 2000) and many restrictive policies in urban space are justified by it. As a result, back stages for hanging out are getting scarce. The security talk drives — and drives parents to drive — teenagers to shopping malls and other commercial places that are perceived safe. Karen Malone (2007) has called children in this era 'the bubble-wrap generation', since they often live in highly controlled environments, also in their free time. Malls and other commercial spaces bring the feeling of home to urban space. Because of their perceived safety and the seductiveness of consumerism, shopping malls have become the 'living rooms' of many young

people, especially girls. It is easy and comfortable to meet at the mall, which is usually perceived safe by parents.

The shopping mall has quickly replaced the function of a town center as a meeting place for residents. Malls today include activities that are considered part of our public life, such as streets (or pathways that are build to look like streets), 'parks', libraries, chapels (e.g. in the Iso Omena mall, Espoo), employment offices (e.g. in the Itäkeskus mall, Helsinki) along with museums and other cultural attractions to invite even the most demanding of audience. Malls can thus be conceptualized as public space, since they are often used as if they were, in fact, the town center (e.g. Pyyry & Tani, forthcoming). Many private companies also rent office space at malls, so there might be hundreds of people who spend their entire day inside a single mall (have lunch, do their grocery shopping there etc.). Some malls actually have housing built inside them, so they truly are a world complete in itself. Crawford (1992) pointed out that enclosed malls suspend not only weather, but also space and time. Theme parks inside many malls function like Disneyland and places are re-created by building replicas of historical places or special environments (e.g. Sorkin 1992). By bringing together so many aspects of life, the mall succeeds in keeping people interested. Something is offered to everyone, or so it seems. Although a mall can be understood as public space, it is still usually a privately owned and highly controlled landscape, and the exclusion of the unwanted is a part of its success. The mall offers its customers a controlled and safe space that seems public and inviting, but is not that for everyone (Staeheli & Mitchell 2006). Not consuming is becoming a deviant action in many public spaces. Lefebvre's (1968/1996) question of the right to the city is evermore relevant.

Since the aim seems to be to replace city centers as the hub of life, the malls also mimic the city. They are often planned to resemble old city centers — with streets, trees (or other plants), 'piazzas' and cafes to gather people. This development has also affected urban planning: cities today have more and more spaces that look like malls. Also museums, among other spaces, copy the format of the mall by offering their guests various opportunities for purchasing objects connected to the actual art shown in the museum, making the experience very similar to strolling through a mall. This development affects all people in urban space. Susan Bickford (2000, 356) remarks that contemporary practices of urban planning that claim to add to the safety and cleanness of cities also lead to segregation. This affects many groups of people, including teenagers who are planned *out* of public space (Skelton & Gough 2013, 460), because they are considered somehow threatening to 'the public' (in which they are then not included) or because they are not validated by their wallets to be welcome at malls or other consumption spaces. Young people are in an ambivalent position of either being viewed as in



need of protection or as posing a threat to others: they are treated as ‘angels’ or ‘devils’ (e.g. Aitken 2001), but rarely as a group with rights to urban space.

Regardless of a growing awareness of young people’s need to spend time together without direct adult supervision and ready-made schedules, policy-makers and urban planners continue to plan young people out of public space with regulation, monitoring and various projects of zero tolerance (e.g. ‘Stop Töhrville’ project against graffiti in Helsinki; Koskela & Nurminen 2010). Urban space is filled with prohibition signs (‘no skating’, ‘no rollerblading’, ‘no loitering’) and physical obstructions (e.g. skateboarding blockers, Figure 1).



**Figure 1** Welcoming benches and unwelcoming skateboarding blockers in downtown San Francisco. Photograph by NP.

Also more subtle ways of unwelcoming are used, for example at the Kamppi shopping mall in Helsinki benches have been removed from where young people used to sit and outside of the mall stairs are watered to prevent them from gathering there, too (Tani 2015). Classical music is played at malls and other places where young people are not wanted. Another ‘teen repellent’ is the British invention, *Mosquito*, a device producing a high-pitched sound that cannot be heard by older ears, but is distressing to young people (Walsh 2008).

Planning out is implicit also in designing of places for young people (skate parks, youth centers etc.) since, as Aitken (2001, 151) points out, young people are spatially outlawed by society in these acceptable 'islands' (places appointed specifically for their use). Many of these places are valued and frequently used by young people, but besides being practical for meeting with friends and rehearsing tricks, these 'islands' also take part in re-producing the established norms and urban order. Some of these places (especially in the US) also charge young people for entering. These *tight spaces* (tight/loose space; Franck & Stevens 2007) reinforce uneven relations of power and privilege.

David Harvey (1992, 2006) calls for spatial justice in the city when he shows that since the 1960's, a neoliberal agenda to bring down the power of the welfare state has been gaining strength. In this process, public space works symbiotically with private spaces to serve a 'selected public'. This means that also public space must be controlled and the unwanted people excluded from it. This alarming process has emerged at different times in different countries and seems to be occurring in Finland (and the other Nordic countries) at the moment. With it comes an idea that the state is no longer obliged to define wellbeing and justice, since it is presumed that the market can do it better. Anita Harris (2004), among many others, notes that the terms 'customer' and 'client' are replacing 'citizen' in health care, education, living and employment (Harris 2004, 164). For young people today, this situation is all they really know. When hanging out at commercial spaces, they are expected to demonstrate their viability as consumers to rightfully be present. This forces young people to define themselves through consuming.

### **1.3.3 Hanging out: Openings for being differently?**

Since hanging out is an important social function, 'identity' has been one of the core interests in research concerning it (e.g. McCulloch et al. 2006; van Lieshout & Aarts 2008). Researchers have, rightfully so, worried about the effects of the consumer culture on young people's identities, feelings of self worth and 'belonging'. If this culture is all one knows, if the right to the city is defined through consuming and socialization is mediated by consumption, alternative subject positions and ways of being can be difficult to even imagine. Places affect, and a feeling of being connected to a group and/or a place is considered essential for identity formation. A sense of belonging is built in routine everyday practice and through spatial-embodied tactics (e.g. Kuusisto-Arponen 2014). The process of territorialization then also connects to the practices of hanging out (e.g. Childress 2004; Leonard 2006; Travlou et al. 2008; Pickering et al. 2012). Connections have been found between

subcultural styles and the geographies of hanging out, i.e. certain places are 'owned' by certain groups of young people and these territories seem to be well known. As two girls in Helsinki (2013) explained to me (Pyry, forthcoming):

*'Groups in places are so cliqued that they can't really go to other places.'*

Different places in the city are labeled and territorialized within the geographies of hanging out. Some young people hang out in their neighborhood, others specifically stay away from that territory because of not feeling welcome there or sometimes because of simply 'needing more space'. Not everyone fits in the groups that hang out together after school. As the girls went on to portray the situation in their neighborhood (where their school is also located):

*'There are these social circles...there are the populars whom everyone knows, and then the ones that nobody is supposed to like. If you're out [of the circles], everyone looks at you, like, who do you think you are. This is a bit like a small village.'*

Belonging is shown often by just being present and appropriating a place, but also by language, style and ways of being. These have to do with clothes, music, but especially for many girls, also with standards of physical beauty and self-presentation. The signs of skill and success today seem to be glamorous careers (as described in fashion magazines, tv-shows, movies etc.) and luxurious consumer lifestyles. Harris (2004) argues that the agenda behind all this is to create docile good girls who willingly participate in meeting the needs of the marketplace. Michel Foucault (1975/1995) claimed that socio-political structures construct particular kinds of bodies with specific needs and desires. This raises an interesting question of the globalization and commercialization of bodies. Young people's bodies have been shaped throughout their lives (and this shaping does not have to be anything as obvious as circumcision) to fit social norms and structures (Aitken 2001, 73). From an early age they are shaped to fit the existing norms of gender, race, class and so on. Daily practices (upon practices) strengthen the norms and materialities, through which the society functions. If these norms are seen as natural (evolutionary/essentialist explanations) and if cities are planned by appointing specific places for different groups of people (e.g. children, the elderly etc.), young people, or anyone else for that matter, might never get the chance to play with who or how they are.

Although it has been claimed that the civic activities that previously took place in public plazas and the street (Harris 2004, 122), are being replaced by consumer practices at the mall, it is possible that non-instrumental practices,

such as hanging out, can provide ‘a way out’ from the estranging and disenchanting forces of commercialization (more in article IV). Hanging out can create loose spaces, even within the tightly designed space of a shopping mall. The concept pair of tight/loose space is a convenient tool in probing the boundaries and openness of places, and looking at the geographies of hanging out (Tani 2015). Tight space refers to places that are specifically planned for a certain use, such as skate parks and other ‘islands’ mentioned earlier (see Franck & Stevens 2007). The more flexibility a space allows for diverse use, the more ‘loose’ it can be considered. But even tight spaces can be used creatively and hanging out at consumption spaces takes many forms in addition to shopping. The playful practices of hanging out entail a potential for spatial transformation, since hanging out often disturbs routines and challenges the normative ways of using urban space (more in article IV). Through this, openings for being differently are discovered and alternative cities are created.

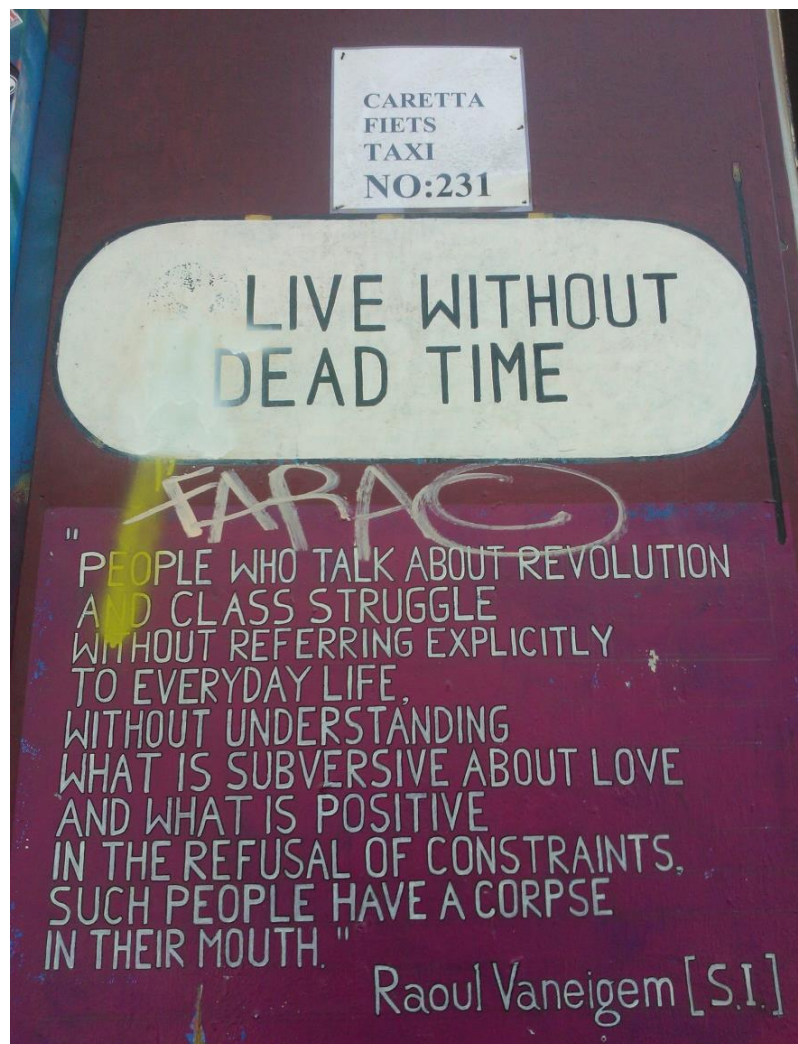
#### **1.4 Approaching urban everyday life: Inspiration from the Situationist practice**

Research on everyday life has greatly increased in the past years (e.g. Highmore 2002; Holloway & Hubbard 2001; Laurier & Philo 2006; Leddy 2012; Light & Smith 2005; Puolakka 2014; Rautio 2010). Also there has been a surge in research on young people’s lives within geography (e.g. Aitken 2001; Ameel & Tani 2012; Cele 2013; Holloway & Valentine 2000; Horton 2010; Horton et al. 2014; Horton & Kraftl 2006a, 2006b; Kallio & Häkli 2011, 2013; Kraftl et al. 2012; Kuusisto-Arponen & Tani 2009; Skelton 2010, 2013; Skelton & Gough 2013; Tani 2011, 2014, 2015; Valentine 2004), often connected to everyday matters. *Children’s Geographies*, a journal specializing on issues that have to do with children’s and young people’s lives, has now been published for over a decade (since 2003, see Matthews 2003). Against this inspiring background, there is good reason to expect that the discussion will continue to flourish and take new turns. Approaching the geographies of hanging out has indeed turned out to be a topical and intriguing project.

Together with the framework that I will sketch in the next chapter, the work of the avant-garde group Situationist International (SI) of the late 1950’s has played a significant role in my methodological ponderings and opened up space for crossing over the artificial boundaries of science/art in research into everyday life. Urban playfulness and questions of the right to the city connect the geographies of hanging out to the thinking of Lefebvre (1947/2014, 1974/1991) and the Situationist International, who attempted to

overcome functionalist and segmented city planning and replace it with 'unitary urbanism'. The Situationists felt that functionalist planning threatened to clear cities from spontaneity and playfulness. For them, change would stem from everyday life. This understanding and the passion of the SI movement is well depicted in a quotation from Raoul Vaneigem, that I photographed on a wall in Amsterdam (Figure 2). Similar slogans frequently made it to the walls of Paris during the 1968 uprisings.

The Situationists understood architecture as a social interchange and in order to explain the city, they conducted *dérives* during which they attempted to address and explain the city in lived experience: they walked through the city to gain knowledge of its 'psychogeography' (e.g. Knabb 2006; more on *dérive* in section 2.3.1). For the Situationists, the *dérive* was a creative practice, not a form of documentation, although by researching the psychogeography of a city they aimed to combine subjective and objective modes of study (Sadler 1999, 77). The Situationists took inspiration from



**Figure 2** A wall painting with the Situationist agenda, Amsterdam. Photograph by NP.

Charles Baudelaire's *flâneur* who strolled the streets of Paris in his leisure time, but instead of being mere spectators to urban life, they wanted to deepen the experience by truly engaging with the city through their walks (Jenks 1995, 154; see *flâneuse*, page 42). The idea of the *dérive*, a drift, can be best described as a sentient bodily experience of 'organized spontaneity', a combination of chance and planning. As one of the founding members of the SI, Guy Debord characterized, the *dérive* was 'playful-constructive behavior' and was then not to be confused with the more classical stroll in the city (Sadler 1999, 69–78). The exemplary *dérive* would not be limited by time or strict plans, since the goal would be to stay open to encounters with people and places. The *dérive* could not be planned: it had to be played, lived, re-created in every moment, in relation to everything that was going on. One Situationist teacher encouraged his students on their *dérives* to 'go with the wind, but not without intervention' (Stanek 2011, 221). This advice is in line with the non-representational writers' desire of creating disruptions and new openings for what could be, as will be described in section 2.1.3. Methodologically, this means staying open to the complexity of life, and research: instead of merely describing or mapping the world, geographical research then involves engaging with how worlds are lived and performed (Greenhough 2010, 39–41). Also, research does not only take place within clearly defined phases of fieldwork or writing, but it is ongoing: this research has evolved not only in Helsinki and San Francisco, but also in other cities and at many everyday events beyond organized 'research situations' whenever I have encountered something inspiring connected to this work.

The enthusiasm and passion of the Situationist texts has energized me when I have met challenges in studying the transitory everyday practices of hanging out. The Situationists defined everyday lived experience as an artistic involvement and wanted to shake the taken-for-granted urban routines. In resonance with this, a research process can be framed as an imaginative performance (Latham 2003, 1993), just like the *dérive*, where photography or mental mapping serves as a creative tool. The Situationist influence is evident in the Non-representational theory's experimental approach to doing research, in its emphasis on practice and embodiment. The idea of the *dérive*, attending to the city playfully without fixed plans, resonates with the idea of just hanging out and having fun, and it has guided the process of doing this research. Lefebvre's 'anti-systematic' way of thinking (Stanek 2011), with its aim to draw from different philosophical traditions, and to link everyday experience and philosophical thought to concrete social practice, has reminded me of how important it is to acknowledge that action and understanding are connected in doing research. The process must go on with the field: it must be open to change and surprises.

## 2 The journey of doing participatory youth research

### 2.1 The framework: PAR, posthuman feminist thinking and NRT

In this chapter, I talk about the methodological and onto-epistemological (Barad 2003; more in section 2.1.2) journey of doing research for this thesis. It has been a process during which I have mostly worked with methods that look the same, but the methodological viewpoints have shifted because of my encounters with posthuman ontologies. This has meant shifts in thinking — and doing, if these can ever be separated. The same methods have thus worked differently after the shift. It has been a learning process in which encounters with the participants, the cities and the material have troubled and inspired me. Although shifts are important, there is no reason why a new methodology should be pitched against earlier ones; rather it should be recognized as offering a new route to knowing. A shift shows how thinking evolves, how things do affect (whether they are theories, buildings or cities). Research, just as life, should be taken as an ongoing journey: a path-making during which knowledge is built in movement (Ingold 2000). New approaches bring new opportunities, especially when the wisdom of what lies before them is recognized.

Posthuman and non-representational theorization immediately made sense to me. This ontological turn is a shift away from cultural or social constructionism and its language-centeredness. It is a turn to practice and doings, and a turn to looking at ‘data’ in a new way. The aim is not to ignore the power of words or other representations, but to understand that they *act* together with the material world in complex ways and that they are *not* evidence of a separate reality that lies behind them. This reading has not only changed the way I do research, it has changed the way I look at things in general. That said, the overall aims of all my methodological explorations are the same: to find ways to increase young people’s participation and engagement in research processes initiated by adults, and to better understand their worlds through creating research encounters that are relaxed and open to diverse ideas.

My starting point in choosing methods to test with young people had to do with both practical and ethical matters: as a researcher I wanted to work *with* the young people rather than *on* them (e.g. Cahill 2007a; Pain 2008; Skelton 2007; Valentine 1999). I wanted to treat them as legitimate participants in the research. I wanted to balance the power relations between



the adult researcher and young participants. I wanted to listen to them, to understand their experiences and to somehow even express their ‘voices’. All this proved to be much harder than I first thought, for many different reasons, which I will now discuss. I will present a framework that is informed by participatory research practice, and most importantly by posthuman feminist thinking and Non-representational theory.

### **2.1.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)**

My first encounters with participatory research had to do with studies in development geography and work with organizations that do development cooperation. At the core, participatory research entails a commitment to engagement and collaboration with the people whose life is being studied (more in article I). Add ‘action’ in the middle, and the emphasis on process and a commitment to create a push for (individual and/or societal) change become pronounced. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is rooted in anthropology and development cooperation, as well as grassroots liberationist, feminist, antiracist, activist, social justice movements (Cahill 2007a, 298). In PAR projects, knowledge is understood as situated and co-produced, and the aim is to find alternative ways of adding to scientific knowledge. Through critical reflection of the prevailing conditions, communities and people are encouraged to aim for what Paulo Freire (1968/2011) termed as *critical consciousness*. In Freire’s pedagogical and liberational agenda, action and theory go together. The ‘researched’ people are involved in some or all parts of the research as ‘co-researchers’ and the process thus needs to remain flexible and organic. There is thus no simple prescribed recipe for doing participatory research.

PAR questions the normative paths of knowledge production that too often takes place in academic Ivory towers. One of the pioneers in the field of grassroots development cooperation, Robert Chambers (1997) talks about *unlearning* when he describes one of the core principles of the participatory approach. One needs to be ready and willing to reflect upon established beliefs and attitudes to be able to truly listen to others. This is crucial when one hopes to understand and carve space for other/new views and worlds. Against this background, the concepts of *power*, *agency* and *voice* become central to any participatory research process. When we begin to conceptualize power, we need to be conscious of the historical conditions, which motivate our thinking and constantly be aware of the type of reality with which we are dealing. Subjects are produced by the very established orders they aim to challenge, hence it is often difficult to imagine a world beyond the prevailing reality and power relations. Still, power is not static. As Foucault (1994) notes, power relations are mobile, reversible and unstable. It



helps to think of power through the antagonism of strategies: so, to find out what we mean by sanity we should investigate what is determined insane in a given society, or to understand what we mean by legal, we should investigate the field of illegality, to give some examples. At every point in time there exists an established privilege of knowledge, since knowledge, competence and qualification are all linked to power (Foucault 1969/2002). The crucial question is: Whose view counts and why? This affects the way we do research, which concepts and methods we use, which positions we take and how we proceed with our plans. As Skelton (2008) reminds us, institutional ethical frameworks and guidelines can actually prevent young people's participation. These guidelines then determine who has the power/right to decide to take part in a research, i.e. to produce academic knowledge. I came face to face with this issue when I tried to plan my fieldwork in San Francisco (section 2.2.2).

Acknowledging and fostering young people's *agency* in matters affecting them has been the aim of many participatory research projects (e.g. Gallagher 2008; Higgins et al. 2007; Kesby 2007). In resonance with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989, article 12), young people have been treated as competent agents with a right to take part in decisions and research that has to do with their lives. Challenging adult views has broadened the understandings of what participation and politics can be. Also hanging out has been studied by viewing young people as active (political) participants (e.g. Cele 2013; Christensen & Mikkelsen 2012; Kallio & Häkli 2011; Tani 2015; also article IV). These studies are important, since young people should not be treated as victims or objects of adult protection/upbringing. Their lives should be viewed valuable as such. Still, participatory research has been also criticized for putting too much weight on individual agency (e.g. Thomson 2007). This can lead to an underestimation of structural forces and material conditions, and change can be even hindered (article II). In my encounters with young people, I could often detect an ethos of individuality that prevents a critical reflection on one's position(s) in society. In the worst case, young people internalize problems in social-material conditions as their own, personal problems, and feel that they should individually take responsibility for any possible 'failures' in the project called life.

In PAR, one important aim is to give voice to the research participants and encourage them to critically reflect upon their position(s) in society (e.g. Herr & Anderson 2005). Listening to young people's perspectives has also been my intention, although the research will inevitably speak with my voice, since I am the one who writes up the research (in academic language). Yet, the picture is more complex. Conceptualized within a relational and post-human framework, all voices are social-material constructions, formed again

and again in the research encounters (more in section 2.1.2). A relational view on knowing and thinking challenges the notion of ‘the other’, since voices and ‘subjects’ are acknowledged to emerge in the research encounters in relation to everything that constitutes the fieldwork event (article II). This is one of the reasons why relational approaches have been critiqued for being colonial: for only paying attention to relations and not addressing ‘otherness’ (Lee & Brown 1994). I will return to this critique in the next two sections when I discuss posthuman feminist thinking and Non-representational theory. Usually, in PAR projects a voice is understood to be personal, even if formed in a collaborative process. The goal is to hear, and finally *represent*, the voices of ‘others’ and to overcome the hierarchical relationships that too often have to do with academic research. This is an important commitment to social justice: to do democratic and non-coersive research, and to view research as a process of co-learning (Higgins et al. 2007). PAR is a genuine effort to look past the universalising claims of academic knowledge and make space for alternative views. However, in the course of this research it has become clear that representational conventions and qualitative methods that have been commonly used in PAR projects are not always experimental enough to address the ontological issues and affective relations that have to do with hanging out. There is a growing need for affective, performative and emotionally engaged research that is not limited to cultural inquiry: a need to approach ways of being-in-the-world (Coombes et al. 2014). The concept of ‘dwelling with’ is a valuable tool in doing this.

*Participation* is a vague and rather problematic concept because it often entails the idea of activating or even empowering another person, of giving someone agency, power and/or voice. It is also a technique for governing people: too many participatory projects are part of the very power structures they seemingly aim to change. At the same time, young people’s agency and existing ways of participating are easily ignored (e.g. Kallio & Häkli 2011). Also, young people may not necessarily want to participate in carrying out research initialized by adults. Although ‘participation’ should hence be approached critically, it should not be done at the expense of young people’s involvement in research about their lives. Matters that are important to young people can only really be approached with a participatory mindset.

Young people’s participation is currently widely discussed, but in reality their views and lives are still assessed through (academic) practices set up by adults. To actually get involved with young people, to clear space for change by working together with them is perhaps not considered ‘scientific’. It may well be that researchers aim for participation and listening to young people’s voices, but are still often afraid of taking part in the research themselves. Researchers are afraid of imposing their views, or perhaps even more, of adjusting them. This is a valid fear, but researchers *are* always already part of

the process. In PAR projects, we are activists. It may be that we, as academics, are fearful of change. As Fuller & Kitchin (2004) remark: “The academic theorises and suggests, but the move ‘onto the streets’ or ‘into the community’ as an academic/activist is limited. This is not to suggest that no such forays occur, with perhaps the most sustained critical praxis beyond the academy enacted by feminist geographers.”

And indeed, as a result of decades of struggling to establish their status as legitimate scholars, feminist geographers and other feminist social scientists have radically reworked the way we think of social life and doing research (e.g. Bondi & Domosh 2003; Johnson 2008; Katz 1994, 2013; Koskela 1997; Massey 1990; Moss & Al-Hindi 2007; Nelson & Seager 2004; Rose 1993; Valentine et al. 2014). They have raised new geographical concerns by doing rich empirical work, often in participatory action projects with marginalized groups (e.g. Cahill 2007b; Pain & Francis 2004; Skelton 2001; Tolia-Kelly 2007). Although diverse, this research has commonly aimed at *representing* the diverse voices and experiences of women and girls. The goal has been to recognize women as agents of knowledge creation in a masculine (academic) world: to give women voice. The use of participatory methods has been a way to place women’s experiences as the starting point for studying gendered spatialities. Feminist geographers have been critical of the masculinist rationality which assumes a knower who can detach himself from the world and look at it objectively from a context-free position. This knower can thus separate himself from his body, feelings, values, history and so on, claim his knowledge as universal and see himself as a ‘detached explorer’ (Rose 1993, 7). Despite the differing ontological standpoint, feminist resistance against this rationality resonates well with the non-representational geographers’ critique of neo-Kantianism that continues to prevail in social sciences and the posthuman concept of ‘knowing with’, as I will now describe.

### **2.1.2 Posthuman feminist thinking**

Acknowledging the agency of the material and the non-human is central to the approach that has been conceptualized as ‘material feminisms’, ‘posthumanist turn’, ‘new empirism’, and by Stacy Alaimo & Susan Hekman (2008) no less than a ‘new settlement’ (e.g. Barad 2003, 2007; Bennett 2001, 2010; Diprose 2002; Grosz 2005; Haraway 2002, 2008; Hultman & Lenz Taguchi 2010). This feminist posthuman thinking shares common ground with non-representational geography, as they both aim to cope with the ongoingness and complexity of the world and are inspired by the writings of Deleuze & Guattari (1980/1987, 1991/1994), Jacques Derrida (1980/1987), Foucault (1969/2002, 1975/1995, 1994) and Bruno Latour (1991/1993, 2005a, 2005b). I will attend to NRT separately in the next section for the

sake of clarity. Both frameworks have provided me with tools to approach knowing and participation as being-in-the-world in the context of young people's hanging out.

Posthuman feminist theorization aims at reordering the feminist project that has too heavily focused on representation, albeit for compelling reasons. The linguistic turn was beneficial for feminism, since attention was paid to the social construction of 'woman', 'reality' and so on (Hekman 2008). Clearing space for alternative views, listening to people in subordinate positions, and finally trying to represent their voices has changed worlds. But, putting emphasis on representation has happened at the expense of the material. Representationalism entails an understanding that language or other representations are evidence of a reality ('out there'). There is then a distinction between an objective reality and social construction. As Karen Barad (2003) puts it, representationalism separates the world into the ontologically disjointed domains of words and things. Due to this assumed separation, feminist theory has given too much weight to the textual, linguistic and discursive (Alaimo & Hekman 2008). To overcome the dichotomy between the real and the discursive, we need to move from epistemology to ontology, or as Barad (2003, 829) calls it, *onto-epistemology*, the study of practices of knowing in being. In this understanding, material phenomena and discursive practices are tied together, and neither has priority over the other.

So, how to address this knowing in being? First, a researcher needs to understand that he/she is fundamentally part of the research, he/she is always 'sensing with' and 'knowing with' and cannot thus ever look at the world/data from the outside (articles II & III). Ingold (2000) talks about 'knowing as we go' when he explains how understanding the world happens in ongoing engagement with it: knowing takes place in dwelling. Knowing is inseparable from doing, it is a multidirectional and relational event. Barad (2003, 803) talks about 'intra-activity', when she refers to the mingling of things that do not have clear boundaries. A girl, a lip gloss or a body lotion can take part in an intra-active play, out of which new spaces can be created (article IV). Bennett (2010) calls this 'thing-power', the capacity of the material world to produce effects in human and other bodies. Thing-power entails a distributed notion of agency and acknowledges the liveliness that is internal to materiality. Things do not thus only act as restricting or enabling background for human activity: they have more force than this. Things can surprise us, they can enchant, and hence make things happen. *Enchantment* has a strong affective force, it can be a feeling of trouble or delight (Bennett 2001). The experience is then not always pleasurable, but it attunes us to the world somehow differently. This experience cannot always be verbalized, since enchantment is often only a short-lived moment of questioning the

world and the prevailing conditions (article III). The important thing is that this surprising moment can open up new thinking. Therefore researchers should aim for creating encounters that can foster engagement with the research and the world: cultivate dwelling with, and through this, enchantment. Embodying a 'knowing with' orientation to doing research means taking materiality seriously, recognizing that places and things have the power to make a difference. It means accepting that thinking happens in encounters with the world, as life continuously emerges. Knowing becomes a 'more-than-human' issue. In relational-materialist methodological approach this is referred to as the *embodiment of thinking* (Colebrook 2008), or as *nomadic thinking* (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi 2010): a process of 'becoming-with' what goes on with the research. Thinking happens in the process of creating data and in new encounters with it.

Ergo, posthumanist research tackles with human encounters with matter, and looks at what emerges in these encounters. When the human being is put to its place, admitted to be part of the world and mutually intra-active with everything else, the world is perceived differently. This has consequences on how we think of not only agency, but also voice, power and politics more broadly. They can no longer be approached as an individual, or thoroughly human matter, as in 'girl power' or other concepts that frame agency/power as something to be personally acquired (and often purchased). Rather, these capacities emerge from the entanglements of human and the non-human in a *rhizomatic* way. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987, 25) explain: 'A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance.' This means that effectivity emerges in the mingling of different things and agency is then a coming-together of things: flows of energy and matter, action and ideas in *assemblages*, in connected units of becoming. Assemblages are groupings of diverse elements, they are open-ended collectives that are never quite stable. Assemblages vary in their life-span, relations and form (Anderson & Wylie 2009).

When agency is understood as distributed, it will also often be overlapping and conflicting. Causality is then multidirectional: 'more emergent than efficient, more fractal than linear' (Bennett 2010, 33). There is never one efficient cause for an event, life is more messy than that. Not only do humans have agency, but so do things, processes and assemblages. Human subjectivity becomes multiple and complex, but this does not have to mean that we need to give up the notion of human intentionality altogether. Clearly, human potential differs from that of a rock or a body lotion. Intentionality is one form of power, but it is often in competition with other forms (e.g. structures, prevailing ideas etc.). The power of intent is the power to make a difference, but a power to affect and be affected is possessed also

by non-human bodies (Bennett 2010, 32). Human agency is then part of the world and it emerges differently within different situations: as part of everyday practices (of hanging out etc.), in adult-child research situations and so on. Subjectivity is produced in encounters with the world: it is becoming, ongoing and relational. The use of 'I', 'participant', 'girl' become problematic within this understanding, but it is still the language that we are accustomed to. Yet, it is critical to remember that a body always links with other bodies (human or non-human) and does not exist outside of assemblages. It can be understood as a coming-together of *forces* that work inside and outside of it, as Elizabeth Grosz (2005, 146) explains:

*'A living body in this duality — not mind and body, as Western philosophy has conjectured since its modern emergence in Cartesianism — but a single surface or plane, as Merleau-Ponty has suggested, that is capable of being folded, twisted, or inverted, which may be seen to contain one side and another, or rather, an inside and an outside, two overlapping and superimposable ever-changing networks or strata, separated by a relatively porous sac, an epidermal clothing or biological architecture, yet linked by practice, action, or movement, through ingestion, incorporation, and action.'*

The humanist individual with a free will and intentionality reflected on meanings with her coherent and autonomous voice (St. Pierre 2008, 319). John Horton (2010) remarks that young people do not usually refer to *meanings* when they talk about their lives. Rather, they care about how things *feel* and by discussing this, shed light on what *matters* to them. A shift away from emphasizing meaning is linked to decentering the notion of voice in research as representing an individual human view. A voice is then not something that can be given to others, rather all voices are formed in the research process. But when these voices are understood to emerge in rhizomes, their authenticity becomes questionable. Rhizomes do not have origins and neither do voices. Alecia Youngblood Jackson (2014, 707) talks about *rhizovocality*, and explains: 'Rhizo, a prefix I borrow from Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) image of the rhizome, captures the heterogeneity of vocality in a spatial figuration, accentuating its connection to other things through its very diversity.' Because rhizomes do not have origins, they escape any claim for coherence and stability. However, it is important to note here that this does not mean that researchers should ignore what is said during research encounters. What young people say matters, but the words should not be treated as evidence of their lives — rather, researchers should pay more attention to the many important things and practices that cannot be verbalized. Sometimes words point to these things, sometimes they can only be touched with other means (e.g. artistic methods).

That said, the implications of this ‘new settlement’ are radical: it is a shift away from human individuality, from evidence based science and simplistic explanations of the world. It is a shift away from splitting the world into ‘a reality’ and representations/concepts of it: an understanding that theory and practice go together, everything is entangled. Doing research becomes a nomadic, imaginative, non-linear and rhizomatic process in which action and thinking are always connected. Attention is paid to the emergence of things, to the momentary and fleeting. The posthumanist turn in feminist thinking has consequences on how we attend to ontology, epistemology, politics and also ethics. It moves the focus from ethical principles to ethical practices, i.e. situated actions. Ethical decision-making needs to focus on the multiple material consequences of doing research, not only on discourses (Alaimo & Hekman 2008). Ethics have to do with being ‘in it together’, sharing the experience and being open to new kinds of knowledge (article II). Ethics should be a constant concern throughout the research, reflected on in each encounter. *Ethic of care* refers to this kind of ethical decision-making that is rooted in commitment to others (Manzo & Brightbill 2007). Awareness of the complex relations and positions of any research process adds to the ethical practices of doing participatory fieldwork (e.g. Horton & Kraftl 2006b; Jones 2008). This standpoint is also central to non-representational theorization, as I will now illustrate.

### **2.1.3 Non-representational theory (NRT)**

‘Non-representational theory’ (NRT) is a label for a predominantly British academic movement inspired by Nigel Thrift’s (e.g. 2000, 2008, 2011) thinking (e.g. Anderson 2009, 2012; Anderson & Harrison 2010; Anderson & Wylie 2009; Dewsbury et al. 2002; Latham & McCormack 2004; McCormack 2003; Thrift & Dewsbury 2000; Wylie 2005, 2009). Because of the diversity of writings somehow connected to NRT (cited in this section, and elsewhere in the work), it is perhaps wiser to talk about ‘non-representational theories’ or ‘non-representational geographies’ in plural. This body of thought that aims to work beyond representation is closely connected to posthuman feminist thinking and some of the writings could have well been referenced already under the previous section (e.g. Colls 2004, 2007, 2011). The literature shares an understanding of action as a relational phenomenon and acknowledges the capacity of the material and non-human to affect and take part in events. This understanding is central in my approach to hanging out as ‘dwelling with’ (article IV) and to thinking as an event of ‘knowing with’ (articles II & III) the world.

Echoing the ambition of posthuman feminist research, NRT ‘challenges the epistemological priority of representations as the grounds of sense-

making or as the means by which to recover information from the world' (McCormack 2003). This implies a shift from the emancipator efforts of critical theory towards dismantling categories and focusing on *things taking place*. Non-representational theory focuses on everyday affectual geographies, since it is through these that the world is experienced. There is a strong emphasis on creative research practices and the production of experimental knowledge, which is always situated but has the power to shake existing understandings (e.g. Kullman 2013; Thrift 2000, 2011). NRT hence has a practical and processual basis for looking at the world: attention is paid to how the world emerges through manifold spatial relations and processes (article II). The importance or force of these processes is not determined by whether or not they are verbally reflected upon. According to non-representational theorization, events are effective rather than representational: the world is thus approached with a desire to understand *how*, instead of *what* (Thrift 2000). Consequently, a clear separation of ontology and epistemology becomes impossible (cf. Barad's, 2003, 'onto-epistemology'). J.-D. Dewsbury et al. (2002, 437) accuse social scientists of neo-Kantianism, "a curious vampirism, in which events are drained for the sake of the 'orders, mechanisms, structures and processes' posited by the analyst; an ontological freezing in which the excessive is recuperated for the sake of theoretical certainty, the flourish of generalisation, a well formed opinion and a resounding conclusion." Openness of research suffers because the world is made to fit rigid classifications, it is simplified.

More than a decade ago, Dewsbury et al. (2002, 439) characterized NRT as 'tactical suggestions' on how to do geography. These suggestions, or openings for a dialogue, were then presented in the form of the following statements:

- 1) Theory is always already practical.
- 2) Reading theory and doing fieldwork should not be differentiated as practices.
- 3) Certain empirical encounters should not be resolved.
- 4) 'It is the reduction of the social to fixed forms that remains the basic error' (Williams 1977, 129).
- 5) Politics is not limited to the Social.
- 6) I do not have experiences, they are not mine. Experience is trans-subjective.
- 7) The goal of reflexivity should not be transparency.
- 8) The definition of the problem is something that remains problematic.
- 9) 'Method in general is a means by which we avoid going to a particular place, or by which we maintain the means of escaping from it' (Deleuze 1983, 110).
- 10) Discourse is not a closed system, a discourse is a field of potential.
- 11) The notion of a hegemonic discourse is an oxymoron.
- 12) An example is only an example of itself.
- 13) Materiality is agency.
- 14) Space is a verb not a noun.



My reading of these suggestions includes the following remarks about doing research. Since thought and action are understood as linked, reflection takes place in practical engagement with the world (articles II & III), i.e. ‘theory is always already practical’ and doing fieldwork is likewise always theoretical. There are often encounters during fieldwork that remain problematic or troublesome. Although I cannot be sure of what Dewsbury et al. (2002) refer to by saying that some ‘encounters should not be resolved’, troubling moments can take the research to new directions. These openings become possible when social life is not squeezed into clean-cut and fixed categories. Because NRT defines life widely as humans/with/plus and views the ‘social’ as produced continuously by everything that is taking place (Cresswell 2012), politics can be argued to actuate from the intra-active play between human and non-human bodies (article IV). Here, it is important to remember that most events are framed by prevailing power structures that limit the potential of how politics emerges (e.g. while hanging out at a shopping mall). Since the world is understood as ordered within assemblages and subjectivity as something that emerges rhizomatically, experiences are never individual. They emerge within the multiplicity of relations in a given event.

Although reflection is a goal in doing fieldwork, often reflexive moments of *hesitation* (Thrift et al. 2010; cf. Bennett’s ‘enchantment’) and thought are just unspecific moments of being moved by something (article III). They might thus pass by unnoticed and unverballed, but this does not mean they are less important. Clear definitions of problems (i.e. strictly defined research questions) deny the excess of the world (e.g. Anderson & Wylie 2009). There is always an exception, always something that escapes categories. Pre-ordered methods, strictly defined problems and categories force research into a prescribed order of thought and practices, and make experimentation impossible (St. Pierre 2014). This is the push of the normative. Methods should therefore always be used as creative tools that allow for new encounters and directions. Openness to improvisation is essential in a world that is acknowledged to be fluid, ongoing, and excessive. In this world, there is always another example to be (re-)presented of any phenomenon. When doing and writing about the research, it is crucial to keep in mind that language affects our thinking: it both limits and opens up possibilities. Based on both the fieldwork experiences and the process of writing up the research, I feel that the potential is disturbingly limited, since certain language is legitimated by history and convention (and institutions such as school): this determines both the form of expression and content (see Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987).

Dewsbury et al. (2002, 437) quote Samuel Beckett (1987, 19) to point to the ongoingness of the world: ‘the creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place everyday’. The world is open-ended. As

a consequence, Non-representational theory aims to grasp the flow of the everyday, especially that which escapes (verbal) representation: to focus on what people do rather than what they say they do (McCormack 2003). Questions about what people do are asked with an understanding of the internal liveliness of matter and of human entanglements with it. As discussed in the previous section, agency emerges from these entanglements, and is thus often overlapping and conflicting. For the purpose of my work, this understanding is central when the concepts of agency and participation are probed within the context of teenage girls' hanging out (article IV). It also has to do with how knowing is conceptualized as a relational and multidirectional event of 'thinking with' (articles II & III). Within this framework, 'space' is never just a stable background to events: it is relational, ongoing and active. The tactical suggestions given by Dewsbury et al. (2002) hence sum up the non-representational framework for doing research quite poignantly.

Research on the spatialities of the body, practice and emotion/affect/feeling has flourished across social-scientific disciplines over the past decade (e.g. Colls 2007; Healy 2014; Horton & Kraftl 2006a, 2009; McCormack 2003; Wylie 2005, 2009). 'Emotional' and 'affectual' geographies work this field differently, but they both attend to the important realm of passions, sentiments and feelings, and work against the Cartesian, rationalistic and emotion-free approach to life (Smith et al. 2009). According to NRT, human interaction with the world is habitual rather than 'conscious' and attention is thus paid to the affectual geographies of everyday life. Thrift (2004) has described *affect* as the 'push' of life. It is an intensity that can be contagious and transferred: it spreads and multiplies. As Thrift (2008, 221) explains: 'it refers to complex, self-referential states of being, rather than to their cultural interpretation as emotions'. Affect is therefore distinguished from both emotion and feeling that are commonly understood as subjective: affect can be conceptualized as a transpersonal capacity (of a human or non-human body), a force that circulates both within and between diverse bodies. Affect emerges in encounters. For the purpose of this research, it is important to acknowledge the increased biopolitical control of life through *politics of affect* that are at work in the urban everyday lives of teenagers, especially in commercial spaces (e.g. Anderson 2009; Thrift 2004). *Affective atmospheres* are strategically created to regulate people's movement and behavior. But, as atmospheres are continually emerging and changing, they can be reworked and interfered with (article IV). An atmosphere can be felt as intensely personal, but at the same time, it belongs to collective situations: it thus unsettles the distinction between affect and emotion (Anderson 2009).

NRT has been criticized and sceptically approached by many (e.g. Cresswell 2006, 2012; Laurier & Philo 2006). It has been accused for its

distant approach to human feelings and life (due to concentration on affect rather than emotion) and for refusing the possibility of representation. In this refusal, non-representational geographers are said to employ complicated and abstract language to theorize everyday practice and performance that often cannot be verbalized (Thien 2005). Quite poignantly, Pile (2010, 17) notes that, in attending to everyday affectual geographies, NRT ‘continually does what it says cannot be done: it cannot help but represent and represent *affect* — and *in language*.’ Here Hayden Lorimer’s (2005, 2008) term ‘more-than-representational’ would better serve to describe non-representational research. His point is that NRT does not reject representation per se, but attention is focused on practice and performativity, and the taking place of everyday life. Representations are therefore approached as ‘doings’, as things that take part in these geographies. Moreover, theorizing something that cannot be verbalized is not the same as re-presenting it.

NRT has been criticized for a lack of serious thought on gender, race, power and politics (e.g. Barnett 2008; Hemmings 2005; Salhanda 2006). With its emphasis on affects as transpersonal, Tolia-Kelly (2006) claims that NRT has been inattentive to the fact that different bodies have different affective capacities within the *power-geometries* (Massey 2004) that frame our political and social world. Bodies are marked as powerful or less powerful, and gender, skin color or other qualities influence their capacities to affect: in today’s political atmosphere in the Western world, an Arab body is marked as frightening. This highly affectual marking of bodies impacts young people’s freedom of mobility: they are often planned out of public space (section 1.3.2). Conjointly, Katharyne Mitchell and Sarah Elwood (2012) call for historical and structural analysis to qualitative methodologies that are informed by NRT in order to keep these interventions politically relevant. This demand has to do with the need to situate research and fieldwork within a larger historical and geographical context.

To say that non-representational geographies do not address the questions of inequality and ‘otherness’, is to heavily simplify the picture. Every event is constituted by complex and multiple relations that include also *absent* ‘others’: histories, memories, people and things (e.g. Hetherington & Law 2000; Law & Mol 2001; Wylie 2009). Acknowledging the weight of these forces is crucial in research into public space and the everyday practices of hanging out. Every society is formed with complex power relations. Daily actions (upon actions) build on those relations, through which the society functions. Power is embedded in the system of social and material networks — but it emerges differently in different situations as a capacity to affect or be affected. A body emerges differently in different situations: an Arab body is not always perceived as frightening and a teenager can be treated either as an

‘angel’ or a ‘devil’, a friend or a foe. Also space is multiple and fluid: a shopping mall emerges as a playful, even non-commercial, space when teenagers are engaged with it by hanging out (article IV). This all is not to say that anything is possible at any moment. As Thrift (2000, 217) notes: ‘The potential of events is always constrained. Events must take place within networks of power which have been constructed precisely in order to ensure iterability.’ Often, change is slow and there are many things working against it: language, histories and memories are part of the assemblage within which things emerge.

NRT and other relational approaches have been criticized for not taking into account the activities of intentional human subjects, i.e. human agency and politics. This has to do with a claimed absence of differentiated bodies in non-representational theorization. Rachel Colls (2011) reacts to this concern by attending to difference as what Grosz (2005, 172) defines as an ‘ontological force’. When a body is understood as rhizomatic, a thinking subject can be viewed as a complex ‘coming-together’ of *forces* that work both inside and outside of it, there and then. These forces can be material, affectual, historical, social, political, economic, technological and so on (Colls 2007, 2). Mitch Rose (2010, 143) touches the question of intentionality and the specificity of human agency when he talks about the investments we have in the world (as *our world*) and ourselves (as *a self*). As a framework, then, NRT can be made to do different things: the emphasis on becoming and the processual does not have to happen at the expense of taking into account human intentionality and the many forces that work against it. This has been important to remember in doing participatory research with young people. Agency emerges within events, but humans actively mark and claim spaces as their own (Rose 2012). Sometimes this marking and claiming is verbally reflected upon, sometimes not (article IV).

Throughout my work, I have tried to take this criticism seriously. Admittably a relational understanding of the world entails a danger of depoliticizing young people’s action. But, to look at the same coin from the other side: not taking materiality seriously entails a danger of putting too much emphasis on human intentionality. After all, we do exist in the world, and this we cannot escape. Participatory work with young people has also been participatory work with two cities and countless things that have taken part in the research process. In the encounters with all these ‘participants’, I have learned a lot about what matters to young people, and to teenage girls specifically. Multiple histories, ideas and materialities take part in participatory research encounters. But instead of approaching these encounters via voice and representation, the importance is placed on the process of thinking that takes place in the research encounters with the participants (articles I & II). Here, methods play an important role. The aim is to overcome the uni-

versalizing logic of academic knowledge, pay more attention to embodiment, and create openings for ‘thinking with’ (article II).

My role has been to clear space for these creative encounters and make things visible by naming them as worth seeing. This role is an active one, and it entails an understanding that my engagement with the world has real consequences (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi 2010). Some of these consequences I know of, some I missed and others may be only emerging. NRT provides an excellent framework for approaching life in a fractured and ongoing world: attending to experience as it is experienced. An acknowledgement of the complex relations present in any research situation adds to the awareness of ethical issues that may require special attention. Things can emerge differently. Beth Greenhough (2010, 47) points out that researchers need to pay attention not only the practices of people, but ‘also the understandings of the world that both inform and are informed by these practices’. An embodied and experimental approach toward doing research is central in non-representational thinking and — as in action research projects — attention is given to what emerges and unfolds in the process with the participants. Doing research is a continuous journey of thought, experimentation that goes on and on. There is no sense in striving for one solution, one explanation only. Then, there is no sense in freezing non-representational geographies to be one clearly defined thing, either. Participatory research with young people offers a great opportunity to take NRT to new directions.

Before introducing the participatory methods that were tested and explored with in this research, I will briefly sketch the outline of the three fieldwork phases in Helsinki and San Francisco in 2011–2013.

## **2.2 Fieldwork**

### **2.2.1 Helsinki, 2011**

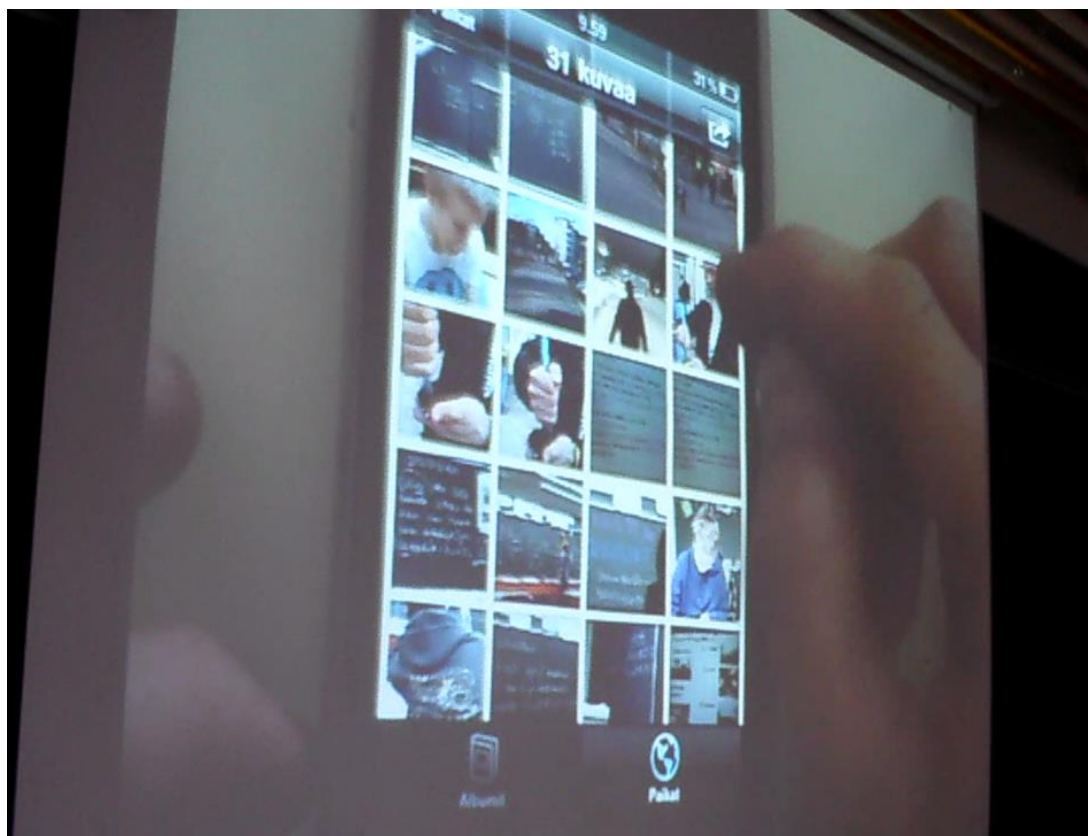
The first phase of fieldwork for this research was a pilot study that took place in Helsinki in the spring of 2011. This study was guided by the initial/preliminary research questions presented in section 1.2. The intention was to test the methods and then plan the research further (article I). The study was conducted in connection to a 9<sup>th</sup> grade geography course that had to do with Finland. The participants were 15 to 16 years old. They came from the surrounding areas of this public school and were from diverse social-economic backgrounds. One aim of the project was to build connections between young people’s everyday urban geographies and formal education within the context of the course that dealt with questions of regional identities, place attachment and local living environments. This is why a GIS

learning platform (PaikkaOppi) was used in the project. As part of the learning/research project, the students did mind mapping of hanging out at school (in groups of two to four) and then did photography on their free time in places that were important to them. At school, they attached selected photographs onto the GIS platform.

The geography teacher who I worked with also participated in organizing the project and took care of many practical matters, since I was new to the school and to the young people involved. In the two months of the pilot study, I was present at nine geography lessons and met the students in that connection. Only one out of the 19 students in the class did not get parental consent to take part in the research. The same student was also absent from many lessons. The other students participated in the entire research project, because it was conducted as part of their formal education. In addition, eight girls volunteered to meet me after school for more detailed interviews and got to test the method of what I later came to name in English as a 'photo-talk' (article II).

I started the project by shortly introducing the project and went through the obligatory procedure of handing out documents for parental consent. The participants filled in a short background questionnaire. As I reflect in article I, I quickly learned that things proceeded too quickly. When a researcher arrives, everything is new to the participants and it is often their first time of doing research. Taking time and space to plan the research together with young people should always be a priority. Participatory research should remain organic and flexible: it should remain open to life. Openness to changes of direction is imperative when the world is acknowledged to be ongoing, and when participation is a genuine commitment. If the research plan is fixed in advance, little space is left for experimentation. But — and this is the critical lesson learned from the pilot study — when the research is conducted within the school context, keeping the plan flexible can turn out to be extremely tricky. The school space and discourse force a certain structure upon the process that makes improvisation very difficult. Even when this space is understood relationally, as a coming-together of many forces and 'things' (chairs, tables, books, teacher and student bodies, but here also experiences and ideas of hanging out, laughter, sunshine etc.), the histories and policies that have to do with school are rigid and powerful. In this context, young people seem to expect that they are told what to do (article I). The research is then forced into a set order of thought and practices that are hard to escape. This order was felt throughout the process, often even when meeting with the girls outside of school. That said, also new things and thinking emerged. Most of the participants told me that they enjoyed doing photography in the city. They all had cameras in their mobile phones, which made photography easy and they seemed to have fun while presenting their

work to others in class (Figure 3). There were some technical problems with the GIS learning platform that was used to map the photographs, but somehow the problems also relaxed the situation by shifting the attention away from individuals to machines. Also, talking about hanging out built a pleasant and lively atmosphere to the classroom. Still, many things could have been organized differently, as I reflect in article I. Often this has to do with very small details and ethical choices that cannot be foreseen. It is thus the researcher's job to make sure that space and time are left for improvisation and changes of plans.



**Figure 3** A student presenting photographs from a mobile phone with a document camera.

This first fieldwork phase was a learning process that forced me to re-think my ways of doing research. I went through some serious puzzlement in trying to encounter the participants as equals who would be doing research *with* me and at the same time realizing that this was simply not possible within the set framework and context. I had good intentions in choosing the methods and truly wanted to stay open to young people's ideas and knowledge. In addition to the problems that had to do with the normative context, too much emphasis was put on words and interpretation. Although I did try to stay open to feelings and intensities that had to do with the fieldwork situations at school (e.g. cases of bullying), the focus was still on representation and voice

in a manner that limited the possibilities of what could emerge in the process. That said, I learned a lot about practical matters and the complex relations that have to do with working with teenagers in the context of school and outside of it. Much of it turned out to be valuable in later phases of the research. Also, the most of the participants seemed to have fun while doing their research. The implications of linking feelings of joy to a school project can be significant, as I will argue in chapter 3.

### **2.2.2 San Francisco, 2012**

The second set of participatory fieldwork for this study took place in San Francisco in May 2012. Before this fieldwork could happen, I had to overcome quite a number of obstacles. I started by making academic contacts in San Francisco in 2011, to have an organization to work through in the US, as required for a foreign researcher. I then asked for an ethical evaluation for my research with underage teenagers from the Ethical Committee of the Human Sciences at the University of Helsinki. After going through this institutional review board (IRB) process in Finland in 2011, I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) online training course ‘Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research’ once I had arrived to San Francisco in January 2012. I worked with local academics at the Institute for Scientific Analysis for a month to figure out a way to actually do research with teenage girls in the city. I had hoped to organize the fieldwork via a youth center or a school, but quickly learned that this was not an easy endeavor. I was told by an experienced American scholar, Professor Rickie Sanders, that:

*“...it would be impossible for you to gain access to school students in the classroom. You can probably secure the data you need simply by ‘hanging out’ in public spaces and engaging in participant observation. I have a student here who has been trying to gain access to students in public schools and it’s turning out to be a nightmare. Schools make it virtually impossible to get inside. Moreover, in your case you would need multiple permissions — from the parents/guardians and the students. It could be very complicated.”*

So, even with all the help, I was pessimistic. I felt that doors were closing before I even got to knock on them. Then, one suddenly opened. When living in San Francisco in 2006, I had volunteered at a non-profit organization called World Savvy to tutor high school students for a World Affairs Challenge, an educational contest on global issues that was organized every year. I contacted World Savvy about the situation and, after quite many dead ends and some U-turns, finally found an art teacher at a private school in San



Francisco who wanted to work with me. Since I was just returning to Finland, I agreed to come back in May to meet the girls and conduct the research.

Coming back to San Francisco was exciting. I had organized the parental consents and other paperwork in advance with the help of the art teacher, so soon after my arrival I met the girls. An initial, informal meeting was organized at the school and we spent an hour talking about Finland, doing research and so on. We also watched Finnish music videos on YouTube and chatted about pop culture. The girls filled in short background questionnaires. Even though it was a new situation for everyone, the atmosphere felt positive and enthusiastic. One girl decided to leave the project at the beginning, so I conducted the research with 10 girls (aged 12 to 13) from diverse backgrounds (articles II & IV). Albeit attending to a private school, the group was mixed, since almost a third of the students receive sliding scale tuition and the students come from all over the city. Although I met the girls through their school, the entire project was conducted separately from schoolwork.

The fieldwork continued with mind mapping about ‘hanging out’ sessions in two groups (of four and six girls) with a pile of Finnish chocolate, and a lot of talk and laughter. I asked if the girls would like to make videos or drawings about their hanging out and the city, but they all decided to do photography. The girls launched for their photo-walks in the city on their free time, after which I met with each girl to ‘think with’ the photographs in a photo-talk at a café of their choice. To debrief, the girls did mental mapping on their hanging out and San Francisco (section 2.3.2). They also chose photographs from their walks to be collected as a photo-exhibition at the school hallway (Figure 4). I was left with the feeling that the photo exhibition was important to the girls because it gave them an opportunity to express and articulate their everyday life in a way that mattered to them in the normative space of the school. This points to the productive power of photographs and other representations.



**Figure 4** Photo-exhibition at school.

Looking back at this fieldwork phase, I can recall a strong feeling of the force of things. The fieldwork was an exciting and thought-provoking experience: a mix of theory-reading, participatory encounters, methodological explorations and urban life. During the pilot study, I had felt that many things acted as obstacles that pushed me to re-think the ways of doing research. This project, in turn, was a journey of elation and joy: it included a lot of laughter, and in the end, also a few tears. Our encounters were often playful and I take this as an expression of engagement and enchantment. There was a feeling that we were all moved, that something shifted and new spaces were made. We were inspired by the city, by the discussions and got caught up in the flow of things (my interpretation, of course). It is impossible to track down all the things that affected the process, but my relationship with the participants was very different from what it was in both cases in Helsinki. This had to do with the girls' age and most importantly with the fact that the project was not part of schoolwork. I was a foreigner who pronounced words in funny ways and did not always know about the simplest, taken-for-granted everyday things (article II). The girls taught me, I followed, and we had fun. Doing research was inspired by many things that came together in the encounters: we were 'sensing with' and 'thinking with' (article II). It truly was an experience of collaborative spatial-embodied learning (article III).

### 2.2.3 Helsinki, 2013

The third phase of fieldwork was carried out in the spring of 2013 in Helsinki again as part of a 9<sup>th</sup> grade geography course. It took place in a neighborhood that is planned with social-economic diversity in mind, i.e. there are both privately owned and rental apartments, some of which are financially supported. The students of this public school thus came from different backgrounds. The aim of the project, 'Geographies of hanging out', was for the students to reflect on their spaces and practices of hanging out, and produce new understandings of their home city. As in the pilot study, the goal was to build connections between the geographies of hanging out and school education within the frame of the geography course that covered issues of regional identities, place attachment and local living environments. There was some confusion at the beginning of the project, since my plan had been to invite a small group of girls to volunteer to plan and do research with me, but the teacher had decided to include the entire group of 38 students (two classes) 'to help me secure a better sample' for my research. The teacher was very helpful in providing me with time, space and participants for the research, so I modified my plans accordingly and reflected on the difficulties of the pilot project in order to organize things differently this time.

Despite the initial confusion, the fieldwork turned out to be a good learning experience (article III; also Pyyry, forthcoming). Still, in both cases in Helsinki, many participants were perplexed about the flexible instructions and did not understand the 'goal' of the project. The idea was to stay open to new encounters with the city and, in a way, 'go with the flow'. But within the school context, young people seemed to expect clear order and design to be given to them by an adult. In San Francisco, the girls were more relaxed about conducting their research. In Helsinki the projects were connected to schoolwork and the teachers were present in many research situations. This points to the common conceptualization of learning as a pre-determined, controllable and linear process that can (and should) be somehow defined in advance.

As mentioned in connection to the pilot study, also here the topic of hanging out brought a sense of play to the classroom. This is important, since playfulness clears space for spontaneity and new reflection (article III). As in the two previous fieldwork projects, the participants did photo-walks in the city on their free time after an initial mind mapping session at school. I had suggested that they could also produce videos, but in the end, everyone did photography. After the photo-walks, they gathered in groups at school to do mental mapping on their hanging out and Helsinki (section 2.3.2). They also used a GIS learning platform for further mapping to connect the project more to the geography course at hand. They attached selected photographs from their walks to the online maps. This was something that was already

tried out in the pilot project. Both these and the mental maps were presented in class as a debriefing at the end of the project and the two different types of mapping exercises were discussed to reflect on why and how everyday experiences matter. A photo-exhibition was put up at the school hallway (Figure 5). It generated a lot of interest from other students and school staff, and undoubtedly affected the atmosphere of that school space.



**Figure 5** Photo-exhibition at school.

The ten girls who wanted to be more closely involved with the research did their mind and mental mapping outside of the classroom in groups of two to four participants. I talked with them while they were drawing and during the photo-talks in the city. At the very start, I learned that one of the girls had just lost her mother. This surprising event naturally affected the fieldwork experience and the research was taken to new directions. Aside from hanging out, we therefore discussed death, life, motherhood and many other deeply affectual issues during these separate ‘girls-only’ sessions. Here, an ethic of care guided the process. Ethical decision making had to happen in the process of doing research and each situation was a careful navigation of the complex relations that constituted the research event. Openness to surprises not only left room for empathy, it also created an atmosphere of closeness

and, through this, new conditions for thinking. The encounters affected the reflection that emerged then and there: thinking happened in connection to the world. During this fieldwork, with a few of the girls in particular, there was a feeling that something significant *happened*. This something is not easily verbalized, but there were emotional gestures that referred to enchantment. Often enchantment has to do with the joy of life, it is a state of being caught up in a moment. But just as often, enchantment can be a feeling of trouble, even agony. Here, I believe the painful event of death brought up a sense of wonder about the world that could be *felt* in the encounters. Of course, the event of questioning the world does not have to be connected to anything as dire as death; it could be just a passing moment of wonder about an ordinary everyday thing. Whatever the case, this wondering always takes time and space.

### 2.3 Methods explored along the way

What are methods for? Are they tools for ‘gathering data’, and if not, why do we need them? As mentioned, my initial motivation for choosing to do participatory research was to understand the worlds of young people and to genuinely include them in the research. I therefore wanted to explore with methods that would promote new ideas and allow for changes of plans. The aim was to choose methods that would make the research encounters as relaxed, pleasant and fun as possible (articles I & II). In addition to using participatory methods, I have also read, talked, walked, written, drawn and photographed plenty myself during this research project. I have done this all with a hope to better understand hanging out, cities, people, dwelling, enchantment, knowing/learning, and so on. Approaching the world, and methods, with a non-representational mindset entails an acknowledgement of the impossibility of gathering information and then representing it to others. I have thus not tried to collect evidence to prove my points or to point out ‘truths’. Rather, I have aimed for more questions, more thinking in order to better understand human involvement with the world — in this case in the context of hanging out — and then to conceptualize it in new ways. I have aimed at creating situations that could foster enchantment and wonder about the world, both for me and the participants. It has been a challenging journey, not least because I have felt the pressure to show results in the form of *data-as-evidence*. At the same time, I have been enchanted and I have felt changes taking place.

I will now describe some methods that were explored and with which exploring happened in the process of studying the multisensual everyday practices of hanging out that easily escape verbal description. I will start by talking about my photo-walks, since this method has been an important push

to the thinking process and I have used it on many occasions within this research. In addition to my walks in Helsinki and San Francisco, I also asked the participants to conduct photo-walks in their home cities. Since I deal with the participants' photo-walks in articles II and III, I will only refer to them briefly here when I look back to the photo-talks that were conducted with altogether 28 participating girls. In this connection, I will re-present some of the photographs that we were 'thinking with' in the photo-talks. I then reflect on the mental mapping exercises that proved to be useful tools in opening up collaborative reflection on hanging out and urban space. The mind mapping that took place at the beginning of each fieldwork phase is connected to this discussion, but I will not go into that in detail (more in article I). I will also leave out the use of GIS for mapping the photographs from the photo-walks, although it was an interesting experiment. The GIS learning platform was used both times in Helsinki (2011 & 2013), but it connects more to the formal education that is not the focus of this thesis. Rather, I aim to reflect on the potential of the more creative methods of photo-walks, photo-talks and mental mapping that relate to knowing with the city. This is not to say that GIS could not be used creatively (e.g. GoogleMyMaps), but as a mapping device used *at school* it directed the process too much towards accuracy at the expense of artistic expression. Peer interviewing, a method that I used in the pilot study to emphasize the participants' role as co-researchers, was not used later on (reasons for this are described in article I; see also Figure 1. in the article for an illustration of the early methods). I conclude my discussion of the participatory journey by considering the revolutionary implications of posthuman ontologies on how we attend to data.

### **2.3.1 My *dérives*: Photo-walks in Helsinki and San Francisco**

Seeking to understand the spatial conditions of the participants' everyday lives, I conducted photo-walks in Helsinki and San Francisco. I find that walking resembles writing in that through practising it, I am clarifying my thoughts and forming a deeper connection with the world: this is 'thinking as experience' (Dewsbury 2010, 151). Walking has always been a way for me to untie knots of any kind. It is also a way to engage with a city, and with the world, as many writers from Charles Dickens (1860) to Paul Auster (1990) have beautifully portrayed. 'My thinking' emerges in the social-material context of the walk: it is always a process of 'thinking with' (article II). I am always part of the events I observe. Connecting photography to walking further directs the senses to the ongoing and transitory aspects of the everyday. This is why I wanted to do research with this method. But, even though the camera frames the photograph, there is always more going on. Many things affect the event of photography: sounds, scents, memories —

maybe just the wind or a ray of sun hitting a surface. The world is excessive and escapes representation: it seems impossible to capture. A non-representational mindset to doing research encourages openness to this excess. A photo-walk is a multisensory practice during which reflection arises through relations between the sensing and the sensed (Anderson & Wylie 2009). The importance is then placed on the experience of the walk, not so much on the 'end product'. Encounters with the city can produce reflexive moments of re-thinking the world. This thinking becomes possible through dwelling with: it is practical and often escapes verbal description, but is often strongly felt.

This is in consonance with the Situationist attempt to 'address the city in a lived experience' on their *dérives* (Stanek 2011, 220–221). Some Situationists, in fact, used photography as well: Ralph Rumney's 'Psychogeographic Map of Venice' was a visual record of a psychogeographic drift (Sadler 1999, 79). In contrast to the Situationist approach to urban exploration, I have not aimed to capture any 'objective' knowledge of the city. Still, after reading about the *dérive*, the idea of drifting freely through the city without a clear idea of a destination started to affect my photo-walks, which I had initially planned on a map. I gave up my plans and started to let the city guide me on my walks: after all, my research has to do with hanging out, which bears a resemblance to drifting and play. I would not look at a map before turning at a street corner, but I would let a scent, a street performer, an interesting graffiti or even a seed that would charmingly 'pop' under my step invite me. This way, all my senses and the surroundings directed me in my observations. For each walk, I had a theme that I followed (e.g. gender, tight/loose space, young people and public space, appropriation of space). I took the photograph presented in Figure 6 in Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco, during a walk on 'boundaries of public/private space' with the aim of reflecting on who is welcome to places that can be considered public.

The act of taking a photograph can sometimes be an *event* of disclosure: here, the event is the moment of appearing (Dewsbury 2010). In this event, I am not an outsider. I am no fly on the ceiling, but part of the very space I somehow aim to capture visually, and consequently I am 'included in the picture'. During the event of taking this photograph (Figure 6), the man who you can see on the left suddenly asked me: 'Wanna lay with me a little?' Surprised by this, I became very aware of my own presence, something that I often almost forget while conducting the photo-walks. As Wylie (2005) has also noticed during his walks, this immersion in the environment, especially when it is powerfully affectual, triggers a particular heightened sense of self: on my walks I feel I am part of the city yet a disconnected subject within this rhizome. The encounter with the vagabond triggered a smile in me, since the question was posed in a light, playful manner during daytime, yet it also led





**Figure 6** A photo-walk on boundaries of public and private space. Photograph by NP.

me to reflect once again on how doing research is very much spatially-embodied and how my gender affects many of the decisions I make, including the routes I choose (especially at night). One of the participating girls mentioned about often being harassed in this area on her way to school. Many of the girls in San Francisco also told me that the boys in their class have more freedom to move on their own than they do: to use public transportation or to hang out in the city with their friends after school. Albeit in many ways fluid, our bodies emerge within the gendered geographies of the city, and those geographies are in many ways resistant to change.

For a young girl, an objectifying comment and male gaze in public space can be threatening even in daylight. Baudelaire's *flâneur* was not fearful of his surroundings and did stay somewhat unengaged during his walks along boulevards (Jenks 1995, 153). Janet Wolff (1985, 41) has pointed out that the *flâneur* could not have been a woman, a *flâneuse*, since this freedom of 'the gaze' in public was granted only to men in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her argument has been questioned, since in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century women were, in fact, entering urban public space in Europe (e.g. Wilson 1992). Regardless, gender does influence many of the situations, and thus feelings and observations in public space. 'The field' is never neutral, as Tani (2001) has demonstrated by discussing her research on street prostitution in Helsinki. During the photo-walks, my presence affects the space and the (social-



material) space affects my presence: we are both products of altering relations. The photo-walks are then understood as spatial-embodied experiences where I do have agency, but in relation to the environment.

I conducted photo-walks to provoke my thinking and reflections on hanging out and young people's rights to the city, and more broadly on human engagements with the material surroundings. Without an awareness of the material and spatial relations, the world is reduced to a mere social world and all other forces at play end up being neglected (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi 2010, 526). Understanding my photo-walks as participation in the observed situations generated new thinking about urban space and about knowing as a more-than-human issue. Most importantly, the photo-walks opened up the concepts of 'dwelling with' and 'enchantment' for me in practice. The *dérive* was lived experience to the Situationists. Equally, a photo-walk or the act of taking a photograph can be intensely affectual and can thus inspire reflection on the mundane everyday practices that are commonly left unnoticed. Photography is an act and the researcher the instrument, who is always part of the observed space. Here, thinking is spatial-embodied: it is dwelling. Since, as Ingold (2000, 5) points out when he talks about the 'dwelling perspective', studying skills or anything for that matter, requires an active engagement from the practitioner with her surroundings. Photography helped me deepen this engagement and through this, achieve a heightened sense of distraction, where the routine elements of the everyday emerged as oddly pronounced. As Chris Jenks (1995, 155) explains, a person conducting a *dérive* is not 'oriented by convention' and can 'see' the elements and relationships that compose the city by means of this playful practice.

The photographs also serve as fieldnotes that are not as removed from the practice and engagement of observation, as writing often is (Ingold 2011). When I have looked at the photographs later at home, ideas and feelings have come to the surface, and these fieldnotes (along with the written ones) have stimulated my thinking. The photograph of people eating packed lunch on the floor of the Stonestown mall in San Francisco connects to my thinking on the appropriation of space and how boundaries of public and private are negotiated by everyday practice (Figure 7). When looking at the photograph, I can recall a feeling of delight about this mundane event that seemed to transform the normative 'non-place space' (Augé 1992/2008). A photograph thus brings forth things that are more than a mere representation: a live relationship with the photographed space. This representation should still always be understood as a re-presentation, a new event — albeit connected the past experience of the photo-walk. As Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010, 537) remind us, it is important to accept that looking at the photographs will never unfold what happened at that moment, since this reading is an entirely



**Figure 7** Appropriation of space at a shopping mall in San Francisco. Photograph by NP.

*other* event. Something new is produced and created here through engaging with the material. Thus, the photograph, a representation, is understood to be performative in itself, and engaging with it is an event of *becoming with the data* (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi 2010). It is imperative to point out again that ‘analysis’ (thinking through the research questions, theories and concepts) and reflection happen throughout the fieldwork process together with the participants and are not separate stages of the research. In every event of reading, new openings for thinking can unfold.

With regard to the aforementioned, the photo-walks provided me with some knowledge of the everyday environments of young people and ‘put me on the map’ regarding the fieldwork: this involvement was crucial for my collaboration with the participants. Although I can never *be* a teenage girl again (sad but true), I could perhaps be a better listener with this knowledge. I had at least basic notes for our conversations. In addition to looking at the participants’ pictures during the photo-talks, which I will now turn to, I was also able to reflect on my practice of doing photography in the city with the participants. This affected the research situations. Still, however much I learnt on these walks, they taught me very little about the spatial-embodied experiences of teenage girls and Helsinki/San Francisco. This is why the participants’ involvement was crucial.

### 2.3.2 Photo-talks: Encounters with the material

Once they had started the project with collaborative mind mapping, the participants in each study conducted their own photo-walks in their home cities to reflect on their geographies and practices of hanging out. I then met with eight girls in Helsinki in 2011 (article I), 10 girls in San Francisco in 2012 (article II) and 10 girls in Helsinki in 2013 (article III) to discuss the photographs in *photo-talks* at cafes of their choice. The talks lasted from one to two hours. These kind of research encounters are often named as photo-elicited interviews (Heath et al. 2009). I do not use the word ‘elicit’ here, since it puts too much emphasis on representation. I attend to the images as fieldnotes that evoked reflection during the photo-talks. The photographs took part in the encounters, they provoked effects in our human bodies: sometimes feelings, sometimes words or bursts of laughter. This is what Bennett (2010) refers to as ‘thing-power’, the capacity of non-human bodies to affect how the world turns up.

Many other things took part in the photo-talks, as well: sometimes it was music, a baby’s cry or a fire truck passing by, sometimes it was our histories or clothes that affected the situation. In article II, I illustrate an event of a parent rushing in to the cafe in the middle of a photo-talk. Openness to the changes of direction created new spaces for thinking. Each photo-talk was shaped by everything that came together there and then, whether verbally reflected on or not: it all created the rhizomatic mess in which the research took place and emerged from. Reflection in the photo-talks was spatial-embodied: it became possible through dwelling with. The empirical site had an essential role in the talks: by sitting at the cafes that the girls frequented when hanging out with their friends, I learned much more than I would have by discussing hanging out somewhere else. The affectual terrain of the everyday was touched in the talks and much of the thinking was non-verbal. Often it was ‘just a feeling’, an unspecific moment of hesitation that escaped before it could be put to words (see Thrift et al. 2010). My role was to make space for these moments by engaging with the images, to give attention to the often taken-for-granted and overlooked aspects of the everyday that seemed to matter to the participant. I asked more questions when there was a feeling that something was important: we then reflected on the experiences of the photo-walks and talked about things that matter in the everyday geographies of hanging out. Here, my own photo-walks were helpful: we were able to share thoughts on photography as a ‘tool’ and discuss how active engagement with the city opened up new thinking.

A research interview is an exciting situation in which a participant may act and speak according to what he/she thinks the researcher wants to hear. This is often the case when an adult asks questions from a younger person.

By engaging with the photographs, it was possible to avoid direct eye contact. This was important especially at the beginning of the talk. Thinking with the photographs made the atmosphere relaxed and gave the girls a chance to talk about things that were important to them. The talk usually flowed quite freely. Because the photo-talks were not rigidly structured, space was left for creative improvisations with new topics. Attention was placed on the process of doing research together, rather than on the photographs as data to be analyzed. In these research encounters, there was often a feeling that the experience was somehow meaningful.

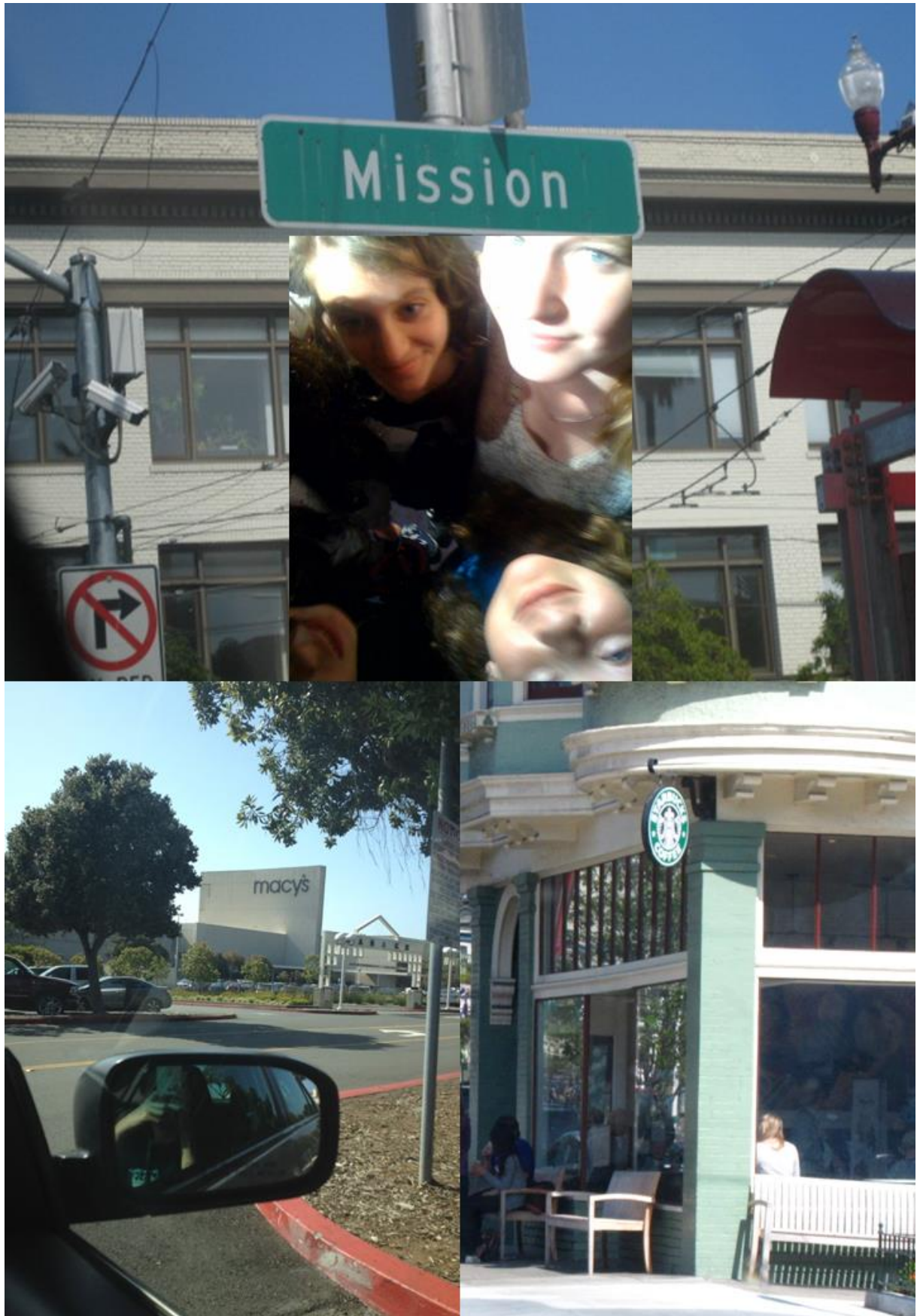
Young people share photographs with friends on social media, so using photography was not far removed from their everyday practice. The girls seemed savvy and comfortable about sharing their photographs, and of course these images were taken for the research and do not therefore include intimate details. I discuss the photo-talks in articles I and II, and hence it is now appropriate to give more space to the images themselves. Some of the participants' photographs have been published in the four articles of this thesis, but I want to show more of them here as an acknowledgement of the work that the girls did. The photographs (Figure 8, Figure 9a, and Figure 10) are not to be read as 'documentation' of the participants' lives or the phenomenon of hanging out, but they were clearly important to the girls. They put time and effort in this articulation of *hanging out -knowledge* (article III), and the photographs point to things and spaces they care about. I also represent the short texts that the girls wanted to link to their photographs (Figure 8, Figure 9b, and Figure 10; the texts from Helsinki are my translations). Although the photographs now have a life of their own, I wish for them to move the reader and to take part in this story, which can have multiple readings. Represented here, these creative fieldnotes can inspire questions about the affectual terrain of hanging out and unfold new openings for thinking.





**Figure 8** Photographs and quotes from participants in Helsinki, 2011.





**Figure 9 a)** Photographs taken by participants in San Francisco, 2012.



**Figure 9 b)** Quotes from the girls while engaging with the photographs (Figure 9 a).





**Figure 10** Photographs and quotes from participants in Helsinki, 2013.



### 2.3.3 Mental mapping

As a debriefing, participatory mental mapping was done collaboratively in group sessions in San Francisco in 2012 and in Helsinki in 2013. The girls (ten in San Francisco and ten in Helsinki) who were more closely involved with the research project did the mapping separately from schoolwork and I was present during each group's private mapping sessions. The other 28 participants in Helsinki mapped their geographies of hanging out in the classroom. To encourage a creative atmosphere and to keep the outcomes open, I only instructed the participants to sketch their own city within the theme of hanging out. I made clear that there were no right types of maps. Therefore, these mental maps do not necessarily resemble what is usually understood by 'mental maps', rather they look like combinations of mind and mental maps. The sessions in the classroom ended up being a little chaotic, since I did not have time to fully concentrate on the work of all the groups. As noted before, also here the school context affected the situation and some participants were confused about the goal of the exercise. However, the playfulness of the topic interfered with the normative context and provoked *an atmosphere of friendship and play* in the classroom: this both added to the chaos and inspired a lot of discussion (Pyry, forthcoming). The relaxed atmosphere helped reduce the fear of failure that too often has to do with schoolwork. It also fostered improvisation with the maps.

Mental mapping in the smaller groups of girls was understandably much more peaceful, both in San Francisco and in Helsinki. At this point, the girls already had experience in drawing the mind maps on 'hanging out' at the beginning of the project, so these sessions were relaxed get-togethers where they got to talk about what they had done in the photo-walks and about the places, things and ideas that mattered to them. Mind mapping about 'hanging out' was also done in the pilot project in Helsinki (article I, Figure 2), but mental mapping was used only in the two later phases. As the mental maps here and in the cover photo of this thesis (also in article IV) indicate, the girls had fun while drawing (Figure 11 and Figure 12). The mapping sessions were lively encounters between the participants, the cities, pens, papers and some chocolate (to list some things). I mention this to note, once again, that many things took part in these events: paper and other items also participated in the mapping. As Anderson & Wylie (2009) point out, different capacities of materialities effect the assembling of how things turn out: post-it -stickers allow for changes in the process (Figure 12) and a well-working marker invites the hand to draw (see also article IV and the cover photograph, e.g. the hearts): sensing emerges between the sensing and the sensed.



As noted, many things took part in the process of mapping. Thinking happened within the mingling of diverse elements, in an ongoing process of gathering and distribution from which also the maps emerged. With a posthuman view, the productive power of material is acknowledged: things, such as maps, also affect and create differences, and participate in the research process (and the creation of the world). Maps are thus not passive objects, but they affect and inspire us: maps are performative. A picture of a guitar stimulated more talk about music, and then about dancing (Figure 11). Drawings of the sun, palm trees, a swimming pool, picnic blankets, bikinis or a beach ball evoked feelings of summer, even in Helsinki where the mapping happened in the middle of winter. When ice hockey was brought to the discussion ('HIFK' is a local team in Helsinki; Figure 12), the talk flowed yet again to a new direction (Pyry, forthcoming). In the maps, attachments to places (streets, beaches, shopping malls etc.) are felt and made visible.

Mental mapping exercises are often used for assessing children's and young people's geographical knowledge (e.g. Wiegand 2006) or even stages of development in a Piagetian manner (Mitchell 2015) and for gaining information about their lives in child-friendly ways (e.g. Béneker et al. 2010; Lehman-Frisch et al. 2012). This was not the focus here. Rather, the aim was to give the participants a means of experimenting with their everyday surroundings: to provide them a tool for geographical play (Pyry, forthcoming). As Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge (2007, 340–342) point out, cartography is a processual rather than representational practice: maps emerge in process and are never really complete. Therefore, the maps are not regarded as representations of the students' urban geographies but rather as momentary creations, *mappings*, which are always in progress. Just as space, these mappings should be understood as open, fluid, rhizomatic and multiple rather than something that is fixed and stable. Hence, even though the mental map of San Francisco is presented here as a static picture, it should be understood as a fieldnote of a creative and imaginative thinking process.

I have chosen my words in this thesis to produce a coherent script about a PhD project. Likewise, the world is written, mapped and organized by countless representations that give us a sense of coherence and structure. But as such, the world can also be re-written, re-mapped and re-organized: represented (see Thrift 2011). Even places where young people might not be especially welcome can become theirs through re-naming, because the youth vocabulary takes part in creating back stages (Matthews et al. 2000), places that are somehow 'hidden' from others, especially the adult gaze. The mappings hence functioned as experiments of *being otherwise* and as 'tools' for opening up new spaces for thinking through active engagement with one's home city. The aim was to pay attention to things and spaces that were important to the participants. The emphasis was on the process of drawing

together, on rearranging knowledge. Mental mapping, just as the photo-walks/photo-talks, brought out the intra-active and dynamic relationship between experience, materiality and articulation by linking action and understanding.

As a method, mental mapping exercises can easily be used in urban planning projects with young people in order to take what matters to them into consideration. It is still critical to not read the maps as data or as finished representations of young people's realities. Most importantly, reading the maps should always be done together with young people with careful consideration of the manifold power relations present in encounters between adults and youth. At best, mental mapping can serve as a tool to inspire all people to look at their surroundings differently, share their views with others and imagine new worlds through creative means of association. The researcher should pay attention to the fact that a consensus is often sought in mapping, and the group's 'shared' view becomes emphasized (see article I). This points to the significance of the process of thinking and experimentation that takes place during the mapping; the map itself and the conclusions drawn from it are of less importance.

#### **2.3.4 The 'outcome': Data as evidence or something else?**

A shift in thinking is often difficult to locate, since there are always so many things affecting its course. But, for a while, something was disturbing me when I was writing and thinking about hanging out. And for quite a while, I could not put my finger on exactly what it was. It had to do with an unhappiness of telling beautiful and coherent stories about a messy, complicated and ongoing phenomenon. It had to do with a feeling that something was out of the reach of verbal description and was thus left unnoticed. It had to do with being uneasy with the idea of 'data-as-evidence' and with how to engage with the representations produced during the research process.

As a general rule, in feminist geography and participatory action research all knowledge is understood to be situated and partial. The representations produced by young participants as part of research projects are still usually considered as data about their lives: they are categorized and analyzed by the researcher(s) in order to 'gather knowledge' about the studied phenomena. Although they often point to interesting elements in young people's lives, the use of photographs, mental maps and other images as data about the world creates a danger of narrowing and aestheticizing reality. It can also create a false feeling of democracy, as if young people's 'voice(s)' could be read from these representations. I find it questionable to analyze the participants' talk as clean-cut evidence of their lives. My encounter with materialist ontologies and non-representational theorization has given me the courage to focus on

the process and ongoingness of doing research instead of hoping for clear ‘outcomes’. I have approached the practice of doing fieldwork as a process of ‘knowing with the field’. By this, I refer to a process of re-thinking the world that happens via moments of enchantment (articles II & III). In this process, the field, people, research materials, books and many other things have all taken part in the research. New understandings have unfolded in moments when something unexpected has happened and I have been forced to think otherwise. This knowing has not necessarily evolved in temporal order, rather it has been a messy process that still takes new turns when I now look back to the field and write about it.

Elizabeth St. Pierre (2008) describes how conventional qualitative methodology generally progresses with methods such as interviewing and observation that privilege the humanist Cartesian cogito (the ‘I’ that cannot doubt its existence). Qualitative methodology still relies on positivism. In this thinking words and thoughts are approached as though they unite: concepts and ideas are thought to present themselves as what they are. Representations (in this case words) are understood to be somehow transparent, to transport and express ‘meaning’ unmediated. Therefore, representations (e.g. interview data, photographs etc.) are analyzed as if they directly presented the participants’ authentic voices. The problems with looking at data this way are thus 1) representationalism, and 2) humanist individualism. This research methodology assumes that a conscious and detached individual can, with his/her voice, represent reality ‘as it was’.

This methodology is based on a humanist epistemology that is unintelligible in posthumanist, new empirical, new material, and postqualitative inquiry in which the human is not a unique, separate individual that exists outside of the world but is entangled with everything else (article II). When a participant talks about her life, she does it within the existing discourse: within everything that constrains and enables what can be said, that defines what counts as important in that situation (Barad 2003; also Foucault 1969/2002). Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987, 108–109) talk about *order-words* of the dominant discourse that discipline both the form of expression and content. The participant’s talk is hence not her ‘voice’ (i.e. her thoughts), rather it is something that emerges in the research situation as a coming-together of multiple things (as do her thoughts), often mirroring the dominant discourse. This was the case when a participant linked some ‘purposeful activity’ to hanging out, whether it was ‘shopping’ or exercise (article I). Her voice is rhizomatic and connects to other voices in nonlinear assemblages. And so, we do not own our voices. Voices are neither authentic nor stable. It would be then questionable to use them as data of a reality ‘out there’ or as representations of an individual human view (St. Pierre 2014). Rather, the voices are *re-presentations*, connected to what was (even if not

presenting it as it was) and constitutive of what is becoming. My voice is intra-active and entangled with the participants' voices, and all voices are formed again and again as the research unfolds.

But, even if not considered as evidence of what the participant means, her words and other representations do matter. But, they are something more. Representations are alive: they act and take part in the creation of the world (article II). Photographs, maps and words all have productive power: they affect us and give push to thinking (article II). They take part in the research. Thinking happens in the action of producing the data and in every encounter with it. Thinking emerges from the ongoing and turbulent *gathering* (assembling) and *distribution* (decentring) of heterogeneous materialities (Anderson & Wylie 2009). Therefore, the problem of representation does not end with language. It discards the force of matter. And, as Maggie MacLure (2011, 999) puts it: 'Within the schema of representation, things are frozen in the places allotted to them by the structure that comprehends them and are not able to deviate and divide from themselves to form anything new.' The world is fixed by the logic of hierarchies and categories. And this is, by no means, the aim of participatory research.

An experimental approach to thinking is characteristic to non-representational theorization, as the world is understood to be ongoing, turbulent and excessive (e.g. Anderson & Wylie 2009). Therefore, also research material and 'data' need to be attended to differently. As St. Pierre (2014) argues, sticking with conventional methodology prevents us from making the ontological turn and doing anything new. It puts verbal expression in focus and, as a side effect, labels other forms of expression as 'less scientific'. St. Pierre (2014) proposes that we leave qualitative methodology behind and begin with theories and concepts that enable new (conceptual) practices that may or may not include qualitative methods. Methods should serve the thinking process. Creative methods, such as mental mapping and photography, can foster dwelling with, and through that, clear space for moments of hesitation and/or the inspiring experience of enchantment (articles III & IV). This highly affectual experience can open up new reflection and deepen one's understandings of the world. Participatory methods fit well with the non-representational frame of doing research, since via photography, mind and/or mental mapping and other creative methods the research becomes an *expressive*, rather than instrumentally representational/representative practice of knowledge production (Kraftl 2013). In this research, the focus has been on what matters to the participants (instead of looking for meanings). Through this, meaningful engagement with the research and with the cities has become possible. This has opened up questioning about the ordinary, taken-for-granted places and things.



Openness to life is characteristic to hanging out and I have tried my best to study the phenomenon accordingly. I have aimed at understanding hanging out and young people's engagements with their cities as everyday practice that cannot be explained through theory or cognition alone. This is why I have explored with artistic methods, inspired by the Situationists and NRT. Instead of aiming for clear-cut explanations or categorizations, I have thought of the research as a set of experimentations with the world. This kind of *new empiricism* probes the intra-active play and intensities of affect that connect different bodies, human and non-human (MacLure 2011, 999; article IV). Thinking and action are understood as always linked. For this reason, I have approached 'visual' methods with a multisensory mindset and taken the methods as tools for reflexive engagement with the world, and consequently the research process (article II).

By being involved in the process (rather than looking for outcomes or 'results'), and attentive to what has emerged in research situations, I have aimed at staying open to the flow and creativity of life: to thinking with the mess of participants, cities, text, data and so on. I have tried to trust intuition, the knowledge in my body, and in other bodies, which has been acquired with time and experience, in this research process but also before. Many events and encounters have been important in this research, even when I have not published them as 'results'. The data has played with me as much as I have played with it, intra-actively. Our boundaries are blurred and all of it is here, writing this text. Something may have *happened* even if I cannot quite put my finger on it. Sometimes these *disruptions* were 'just feelings': I, or the participants, were moved by something, enchanted by the collaborative process. As Skelton (2008, 25) writes of a research experience when she was ten years old: 'I absolutely loved every minute of that interview. [...] That interview had an important impact on my life.' Sometimes the impacts can be (verbally) reflected on later in life, but they can be important even when left unnoticed. The participants often expressed joy about doing research together, and many times this was connected to a feeling of something new opening up. This relates to the discussion on 'knowing with the city' in the next chapter.

Because attention is given to the process of doing research, also the methods have evolved and changed. The methods that were used in this research — photo-walks, photo-talks, mental mapping and exhibiting photographs at school — are all multisensory engagements that support involvement, both with the research process and, perhaps, also more broadly with the world. Through this involvement, new thinking can emerge. It is worth noting that no method alone can guarantee participation. Methods are *tools that allow for encounters to happen*. And these encounters can foster enchantment and wonder about the world. Methods are not for 'gathering

data', but for thinking with everything that comes together in a research situation (article II). Because participatory methods allow for changes of direction, they clear space for new ideas and help in re-arranging knowledge.

Participation is a spatial encounter in which 'subjects' are performative (as theorized by Barad 2003), as are the representations, and they all emerge within the social-material conditions present in the research situation. In this process, also the research material acts and reading it, thinking with it, is an event of 'becoming with the data'. This event of reading is connected to what was or happened, but it is always entirely another event. Something new is created in the encounter with the material and in making the *agential cuts* (Barad 2007). Where and how (what methods or concepts are used) the cut is made interferes with how the world emerges: the 'result' is agential. We continually make choices in how we look at the data and therefore 'an example is only an example of itself' (Dewsbury et al. 2002). Events of reading can provoke reflection and new conceptualizations. Theories and concepts participate in the research process by bringing 'academic thinking' into touch with everyday experience. Concepts feed thinking, but they also change in the process. Thinking emerges when a body or an idea encounters another body or an idea: together they become something else (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi 2010, 538). This makes knowing a more-than-human, spatially-embodied issue, as I will now illustrate.



### 3 Hanging out -knowing

In this thesis, I have approached thinking as a spatial-embodied and multisensory process that takes place in everyday action: it is a process of *recognizing* the world (article III). This process becomes possible through meaningful involvement with one's surroundings. In this research project, reflection has taken place during photo-walks, in the photo-talks, while mental mapping and in countless other encounters with the cities and other material. This reflection has been both verbal and non-verbal. Through a relational understanding of knowing, the process can be approached as a non-linear, ongoing and messy mix of events that take place within assemblages. Knowing is always connected to being and doing: it emerges within the complexity of life in practical involvement. In this thesis, this understanding relates both to the knowledge creation within the research process itself and to conceptualizations of knowing/learning more broadly.

I will now attend to young people's *hanging out -knowing* in relation to this discussion. Article III draws from the fieldwork in Helsinki in 2013 where the research project was organized in connection to school geography. The pilot project (article I) was a background against which I was able to make some practical decisions about how to carry out the research at school and to link it to the themes at hand in the geography course. In San Francisco, the project was arranged with the help of an art teacher, but separately from schoolwork. Despite this, also the experiences in San Francisco added to my understanding of knowing as inseparable from everyday action (article II). The discussion in this chapter is thus informed by the entire research process and built around the key concepts of *dwelling with* and *enchantment*.

#### 3.1 A shift: Learning as a more-than-human issue

A division can be made between more traditional *discursive* conceptualizations of learning and the forementioned spatial-embodied *material learning* (e.g. Aberton 2012; Fenwick et al. 2011; Fors et al. 2013; Sellar 2012; Taylor et al. 2013). This division is artificial, since also the so-called 'discursive learning' that takes place in formal educational contexts is material (e.g. writing) and emerges within complex everyday relations. 'Informal education' generally refers to learning that takes place outside of school in everyday settings, often without fixed plans (Cartwright 2012). Yet, also this categorization is problematic: the border between school and 'the outside

world' is blurry, so formal and informal learning spaces are in many ways entangled. Still, while formal learning is mostly teacher-led, verbal, individualistic, goal oriented (instrumental) and measurable by tests (such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS<sup>1</sup>), material learning refers to informal knowing that happens in action, is often unplanned, takes place with spaces, things and other people/animals, is not easily verbalized and is thus often left unnoticed.

With an understanding of everyday surroundings as places for learning, this discussion is connected to place-based education (PBE), where different informal environments are used as sites for learning or community collaboration (see a special issue of *Children, Youth and Environments* 2011; also Hyvärinen 2012). In Finnish geography education, there has been an emphasis on 'nature' and 'natural' environments, and much of the teaching that takes place outside of school premises still has to do with physical geography (Tani 2013). Since most young people today live in cities, it is crucial to extend this discussion to urban environments and phenomena. Young people's skills of navigating the city and their participation in the society can be fostered in projects that enhance school subject integration (e.g. geography, history and arts education) and bring together diverse skills within the context of young people's everyday lives.

However, the discussion needs to be taken further. My argument for paying more attention to the materiality of learning relates to a wider debate on the instrumentalization and commodification of education (e.g. Irwin 2003; Rautio & Winston 2015). By shifting the focus away from the human as an individual learner, the highly relational, complex and generative ways in which learning takes place can be recognized. Reflecting on ordinary, everyday things and spaces can inspire new associations and open up questioning (articles II & III). By discussing hanging out -knowing, I want to show that 1) young people's everyday experiences are important as such, and 2) by focusing on feelings and the process of working together, instead of aiming at measurable outcomes, new and inspiring ways of learning can open up.

Learning in doing, as understood in practice-oriented posthuman educational theories, is a relational and complex event during which sensing and thinking happen in encounters with the world through practical engagement. Thinking happens with everything that comes together in the learning event. New ideas emerge through surprising encounters and moments of hesitation. This learning in doing does not need to replace

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<sup>1</sup> PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is an international survey on reading, mathematics and science conducted by the OECD; TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) assesses mathematics and science achievement; and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) measures trends in reading comprehension.

traditional ways of learning at school, but I would like researchers, teachers, and parents to acknowledge and join with the many ways in which young people already know through their everyday practice and experience. This does not mean that young people's hanging out and their urban spaces should be incorporated into formal education in any instrumental way, but young people's worlds must matter at school. Experimental ways of questioning the world can be linked with more traditional ways of studying in order to re-cognize everyday spaces, to support different learners and inspire new understandings.

### **3.2 Learning with the city: Tapping into hanging out -knowing**

Ingold (2000) talks about *enskilment* when he refers to learning in everyday practice: responding to one's environment wisely (distinct to different species). *Enskilment* is linked to place-making which is a creative process that produces engagement and spatial skills. This engagement cultivates a meaningful practical relationship with one's environment: it fosters dwelling with. While hanging out, young people's use of urban space is playful: they are usually open to changes of plans and 'going with the flow'. It is the rare time when they do not have strict plans or adult-organized activities: a chance to be together and play with the city. Hanging out is wonderfully purposeless. In this joyous mode, young people are affectively involved with their everyday spaces and generally receptive to what is going on. It can therefore be argued that they are particularly open to enchantment and questioning the ordinary while 'actively doing nothing' (article III). Playful encounters with familiar urban spaces and things can open up space for this surprising and powerfully affective moment of wonder at the world. It can make one see ordinary spaces anew and deepen the relationship with the city.

While hanging out, a person is guided by intuitive knowledge piled up the body and knows how to relate to everyday situations: she/he is 'street wise' as a result of repeated practical involvement. The skills of navigating the city are then inseparable from everyday practice and experience: they cannot be taught outside the context of use. One example of this is how feelings of fear are challenged, questioned and negotiated in the era of 'security talk'. Young people do this all the time when hanging out in the city: they work their fear in everyday practice. As Pain (2009) points out, fear materializes differently in different bodies and people engage differently with fear discourses. This, of course, also has to do with the context with which these negotiations emerge. As two girls in Helsinki described, when they discussed hanging out in 'Sörkka' which is perceived as a scary place by many: 'You can just tell if

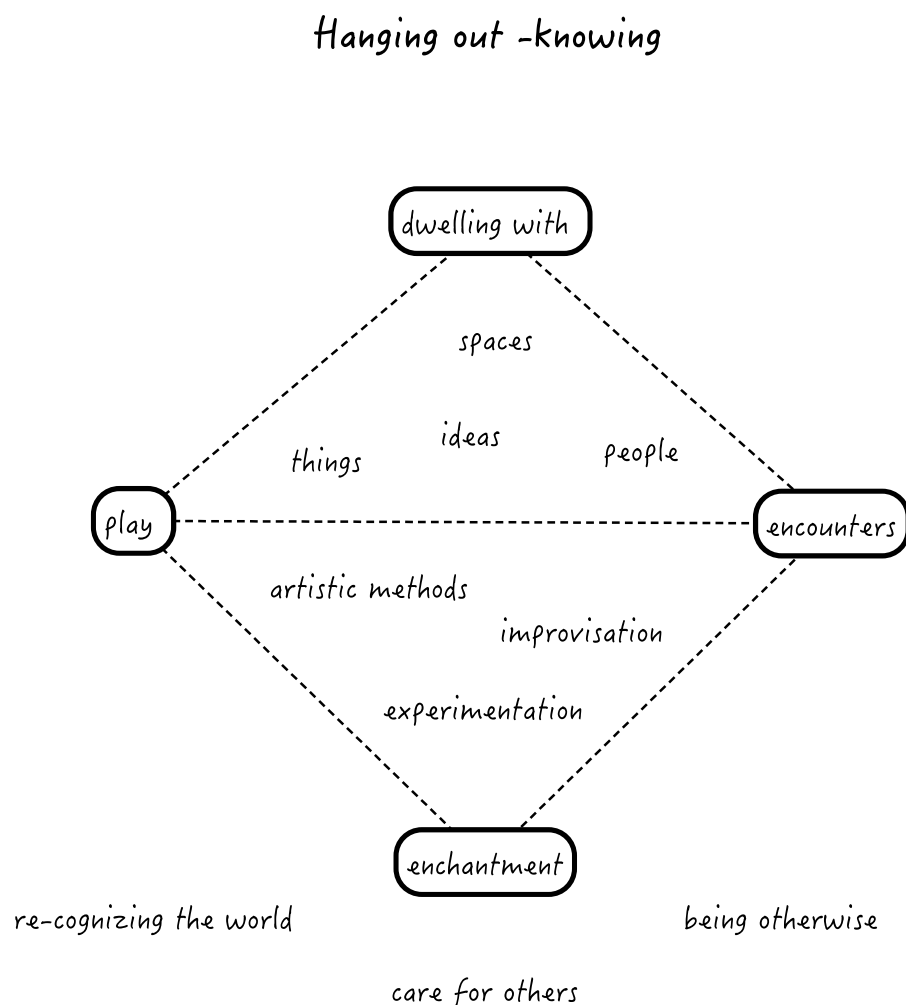
you can talk to a person or not' (Pyry, forthcoming). The girls are savvy in this place thanks to intuition that they carry in their bodies because of everyday practice (article III). While hanging out, young people continuously reflect on their position in the given situation and learn to be responsive to their environment.

Hanging out -knowing is material-discursive, multisensory learning and reflection about one's place in the world and about the negotiations that take place in everyday situations. This learning does not necessarily evolve in temporal order, rather it is an ongoing process that takes place in everyday action: it is a self-feeding cycle of 'dwelling with – enchantment – reflection'. This process of learning with the city is multidirectional, invisible and non-verbal, it cannot thus be measured by tests. Learning is inspired by encounters with the city (people, things, places) and becomes possible through staying open to the complexity of life, through participation, just as the Situationists proposed. This argument entails an acknowledgement of the liveliness that is internal to, rather than additive to, materiality. Hanging out is approached with a relational understanding of young people and the spatialities involved.

Even though the moment of enchantment is always a surprise, the experience can be provoked and stimulated with artistic methods that direct attention to the particular and taken-for-granted in the ordinary everyday spaces. To give the participants a tool for artistic involvement with their city, photo-walking was used as a form of *dérive* in the research project. The idea was to 'culture' young people's skills of perception and sensing in movement, and tap into hanging out -knowing. Enchantment becomes possible when there is time and space for changes of direction, so the photo-walks were planned with an idea of improvisation, e.g. the students were given just 'rudimentary notes' for conducting them (see McCormack 2010). By connecting photo-walks to the phenomenon of hanging out, the playfulness of the exercise was emphasized and priority was given to experimentation. This was important, since the mode of playfulness can be regarded as an openness towards the new and unexpected. Understanding play as a mode of being, rather than a specific form of behavior, underlines the affectual terrain of its taking-place. Play is an attitude of imagination and potential, play makes it possible to re-think what is right in front of one's eyes (e.g. Thrift 2000).

In the photo-walks, everyday spaces and practices of hanging out were reflected by concentrating on doing photography. This kind of reflection is not necessarily verbal, instead it may be just an affectual state-in-between during which one thinks the world somehow differently. An affectual moment of enchantment challenges what is 'known', but without a pre-determined plan. Enchantment takes place through a momentary encounter

that somehow moves the person and is often connected to a strong aesthetic experience. Enchantment is a moment when ordinary things appear strange, even surreal, and it hence opens up questions, however minor, about routine everyday practices, things and ways of being (article III). It is impossible to know if moments of enchantment took place during the participants' walks, let alone pinpoint those moments, but I argue that forming a creative relationship with one's everyday environment can allow for both 1) re-cognizing the world, and 2) being differently in it, i.e. being otherwise. My argument is presented visually as a mind map in Figure 13. It is important to note that the figure should be read as multidirectional and dynamic, since all of its parts affect each other.



**Figure 13** Hanging out -knowing. The mind map can be read from all directions.

The aim of the learning project, ‘Geographies of hanging out’, was to give value the knowledge embedded in the practices of hanging out and encourage young people to re-cognize the city by the creative means of photography and mental mapping (article III; Pyry, forthcoming). The methods functioned as tools for the participants to re-imagine their positions in the city and playfully probe ‘what is going on’ (see Thrift 2011). The idea was to cultivate *feelings of playfulness* not only in the city, but also at school in order to inspire learning. The topic of hanging out took part in creating a relaxed and playful atmosphere in the classroom. Although ‘hanging out -knowing’ is mostly non-verbal, it was articulated in the photographs and during mental mapping: students re-visualized their cities and experimented with what they could be (e.g. Figure 11). They did this with a confidence that came from being engaged with the city while hanging out. In the project, *their* city was considered important, as was the knowledge they have about it. When this knowledge was probed at school, new reflection was generated in the encounters with the materials, ideas and people. Learning happened by participating and being engaged with the city.

As noted before, some of the participants found it difficult to function within the open-ended instructions. In San Francisco this problem did not occur. In addition to the possible reasons described earlier (in section 2.2), it might be easier to organize a project such as this in connection to art education where imagination and exploration are more ingrained in the prevailing practices. Also, school subject integration would be a good way to promote experimental ways of learning. Because of the demands of productivity and accountability, teachers may feel that these creative exercises are not worth the effort. But, learning always takes time. Open-ended experimentation generates new associations and can open up unexpected *pedagogical spaces of enchantment* (article III). It also makes learning fun. But, most importantly, ‘Geographies of hanging out’ gave the students who are not so engaged with the formal educational framework an opportunity to be validated by what they know. Hanging out -knowing does not require expensive hobbies or traveling experience. Hanging out -knowing is not signified by a middle-class, academic discourse. Hanging out -knowing is about knowing the city, not the map. A feeling that this knowledge matters at school can resonate far into the future.

## 4 Hanging out is participation

Playful immersion with the environment is characteristic to hanging out. While spending time with their friends, young people playfully engage with spaces and things, and use the city in creative and non-conventional ways. Because hanging out lacks strict plans, space is cleared for the inspiring mood of enchantment and meaningful involvement with the city. In this chapter, I attend to hanging out as participation in urban life that takes form in both 1) dwelling with spaces, and 2) marking and claiming them as one's own (article IV). These two perspectives are complementary and the division is somewhat artificial: while hanging out, young people thus participate in the world by *being* immersed with it, but also/and at the same time, by actively claiming places as *theirs*.

I focus this discussion on teenage girls and their hanging out at the shopping mall, since in the Western world, girls spend a considerable amount of their limited free time in consumption spaces, namely at the shopping mall. Therefore, there is a need to probe what is going on in and with these spaces that are important to them. There are various reasons for the success of the shopping mall, some of them described already in section 1.3.2. Most importantly, the shopping mall offers a space where the girls are not subject to direct adult control. These spaces are getting scarce in today's world of fear and security talk. It can be argued that fear moves from international politics and media reports to people's bodies and everyday life: it becomes internalized. One girl in San Francisco told me that her mother often reads aloud shocking stories about cases of kidnapping to keep her two daughters 'safe'. Shared notions of fear and safety affect young people's, and particularly girls' mobility in public space. And, consequently, the shopping mall has become a living room for many.

### 4.1 Dwelling with the shopping mall: Creating 'hangout homes'

I referred to the lure of the shopping mall, when I quoted a short discussion between my daughter and me in section 1.3.2. A shopping mall with all its advertising, glossy surfaces, music and often pleasing scents has a generative capacity: it creates an *atmosphere* (Anderson 2009) of consumption (article IV). This *landscape* (Wylie 2009) is designed to create needs and make us feel relaxed. We are targeted with biopolitical technologies to make us governable consumers who willingly act according to what this space

suggests. Needs quickly turn into feelings of ‘lacking’ and ‘incompleteness’ (Miller 2014, 14), although — and because — there seems to be no pressure for consuming, and playing with the artifacts is often welcomed. As a girl in San Francisco excitedly described when she talked about hanging out at an Apple Store™ in a shopping mall (article IV):

*‘I like it ’cause you can just play around with all their items, even though you can’t buy it, like, it’s ridiculously expensive...you can play with iPads, the newest iPhones, even though you can’t have it, you get to test out everything...you just go in there and you just try everything out.’*

Albeit seemingly relaxing and even democratic, this affectively intense atmosphere can reinforce feelings of inequality, and it also frames not consuming as a deviant act. Hanging out is deviant in today’s Western culture already because it lacks clearly defined purpose. Even girls themselves often justify their hanging out by saying that they ‘go shopping’, i.e. they *do* something. The shopping mall is a highly normative space that produces normative behavior — and girlness. The space with countless representations acts to create an idea of how one should be, as another girl noted (article II): ‘If they didn’t have all these beautiful models in the posters, then I don’t think people would worry so much about being pretty.’ Here, matter and sense are intertwined, and sensing happens with the space and everything that is at play there and then: the posters, conventional ideas about beauty, marketing and desires. And what is at play, is a powerful *politics of affect* (Thrift 2008).

But, despite the power of this landscape, I argue that hanging out can provide a ‘way out’. Because hanging out is non-instrumental, it allows for just going along with what happens. When this openness towards the world is connected to playful involvement with the material environment, moments of enchantment become possible. It is important to note that enchantment can take place without a deep connection to a place. It is often provoked by a surprising encounter. When girls engage with the artifacts while ‘just for fun’, they momentarily rework the atmosphere and exceed the relations of consumption: they create a micro-atmosphere of play. This reworking takes place through the intra-active play between the girls and things: not only do the girls play with make-up or hand lotion, but also the things play with them. This is what Bennett (2010) refers to as ‘thing-power’. Intra-active play is about being ‘in it’ together: it is re-entangled, complicated and deindividualistic (Rautio & Winston 2015, 16). A ‘glitter spraying all over’, when the girls play with it, takes part in how things evolve (article IV). The glitter attracts and invites the girls to have fun. Enchantment happens when one is caught up in a moment, dwelling with the world. Enchantment fosters care



for others, and the world, since joy cultivates ethical life — as Bennett (2001, 4) argues: ‘you have to love life before you can care about anything’ (article III). Even though the moment often passes quickly and it cannot thus be verbalized, the expressed joy about hanging out suggests that these moments are more than possible at the shopping mall (article IV).

The circulation of joyous affects provokes enchantment and provides a momentary escape from the seriousness of the adult world, even within the neoliberalizing forces that govern life at the shopping mall. Hanging out is a playful event of openness, experiment and slower rhythm: the rhythm of drifting. It very much resembles what the Situationists called for in their agenda for a ‘ludic’ society and aimed for in their *dérives* (Sadler 1999). The intra-active play at the shopping mall expands the confines of accepted behavior and creates openings for being otherwise. Hanging out disturbs the rhythm of appropriate movement at the mall and the girls make temporary ‘hangout homes’ for themselves by just being present. But, they do not do this alone, since the feeling of home is created with the things that matter to the girls: it comes into being within the meaningful event of hanging out. Engaging with the things and spaces is an event of opening oneself towards the world: it is participation (Figure 14). Girls acquire situated rights to these places by dwelling with them, by being ‘regulars’ of a place (e.g. Laurier & Philo 2006). This momentary appropriation of space connects *participation by being* to the active marking and claiming these spaces as one’s *own*.

## 4.2 Hanging out as marking and claiming: Building our places

For this research, it has been important to acknowledge the inequalities and orders that are often implicit in urban space. Normative girlness is cultivated in the city by endless representations, as noted before, rules are different for girls than boys, and young people do not have the same rights to be in most public places as most adults do. Teenage girls need to negotiate urban space with very different ‘tactics’ (de Certeau 1984) than for instance adult men (or boys) do. It is useful to look at spaces from different perspectives: to ask who is welcome and why, and who is spatially ‘planned out’ (Skelton & Gough 2013; also section 1.3.2). Spaces entail hints and assumptions about what is welcome and desired: power is embedded in the social-material relations present at any moment.

But spaces are not stable. Just as cities, also the shopping mall can be approached as a *moment of encounter*, a variable event (Amin & Thrift 2002, 30). It unfolds differently during the event of hanging out, because by their presence and movement, the girls take part in ‘writing the urban text’ and

challenge the power of routines at the shopping mall (de Certeau 1984, 93). Hanging out is a different way of being-in-the-world. Not only do the girls disturb the rhythm of appropriate and 'useful' movement by playfulness, but they also question adult norms and rules by dressing or behaving in other non-conventional ways. Being noisy, playing music or wearing a particular style of clothing can signal others that the space is designated to that group. Political views, e.g. activism, can be expressed with the body through creative acts. Places are also named with youth vocabulary (article IV). Representations act and affect, and take part in claiming space. Existing rules are challenged also by gathering in big crowds or playing cat-and-mouse games with security guards. As two girls in Helsinki described (article III):

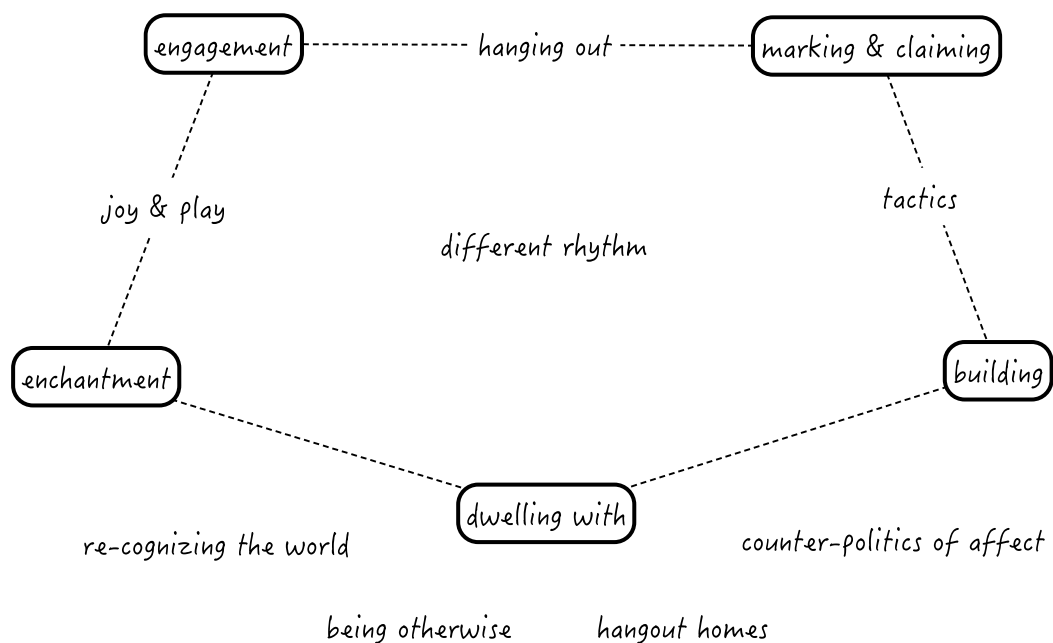
*'There are many young people there, it's a meeting place, even though there are not many places for young people, really ... they don't really want people hanging out there, but it happens anyway ... the security guards come to tell us that we're disturbing other people or something, so we leave and change place, then they come back to tell us to move again, so we move and later come back again.'*

Hanging out thus entails political potential in the form of repetitive everyday practice. Girls create new spaces via play, but also by habitual involvement. Spending time is taking place. Hanging out can be conceptualized as an *event of space* during which 'a world is built and named as one's own' (Rose 2012, 758). While hanging out, girls deepen their engagements with familiar spaces by 'building', that is by marking places as theirs. Therefore, as Rose (2012) argues, 'dwelling is both a ground *and* an event': it is a self-feeding cycle that has a perspective. Girls make their investment in the spaces visible to others and engage in 'voiceless politics' (Kallio & Häkli 2011). But, it is important to add that in this everyday politics, the material world plays an essential part: politics emerges from the intra-active play between girls, things and spaces. This view does not undermine the girls' participation in the society, but places the action within the multiplicity of spatial relations from which it emerges. The importance of this politics is not determined by whether or not it is verbally reflected upon. Central to political agency is the capacity to affect and to be affected (Bennett 2010). Politics in hanging out can be considered as kind of *counter-politics of affect* that has the potential for spatial transformation. As such, this momentary building deserves more attention from academic scholars.

As noted before, teenage girls do not have the same rights to the city as most adults do. Their bodies do not have the same affective capacities within the everyday power-geometries that are at play at the shopping mall, since their bodies are marked as less powerful (in many situations). But, while hanging out, they momentarily interfere with these power-geometries and

claim spaces as theirs despite the lack of control. Tactics are for the weak, but they do have power. By marking spaces, the girls appropriate what is given to them and make ‘hangout homes’ for themselves. And when places matter, this building goes on. By dwelling with these spaces girls express what is important to them. Still, as Rose (2012) reminds us, building is only ever a fleeting claim in a moving world. The ‘hangout homes’ are always just temporary creations. But, despite being a transient claim, they hold a potential for making loose spaces (Franck & Stevens 2007), and hence clear space for being otherwise in the normative context of a shopping mall. Figure 14 sums up my argument for hanging out as participation by 1) dwelling with and by 2) marking and claiming spaces. In the mind map, all features are connected to each other: openings for counter-politics of affect, re-cognizing the world and being otherwise emerge from both dwelling and building, which as Rose (2012, 757) argues, are ‘two sides of the same coin’.

### *Hanging out as participation*



**Figure 14** Hanging out is participation. This mind map should be understood as processual and multidirectional.



## 5 Reflections

In her keynote at the recent *4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Geographies of Children, Youth and Families* in San Diego, Skelton (2015) encouraged children's geographers to 'speak back' to the field of Geography. This research has been an attempt to do so, to take part in the discussion that is going on in geography, particularly in the debate circling around Non-representational theory. Although I do not agree with everything that non-representational thinkers have to say, NRT has provided an inspiring framework for doing participatory research, especially together with posthuman feminist theorization. NRT has reminded me to stay open to the new and unpredictable, to that which cannot always be verbalized and does not easily fit themes or categories. According to NRT, reading theory and doing fieldwork should not be differentiated as practices (Dewsbury et al. 2002). However, non-representational research is too often a little detached from the life it aims to study. Therefore, the contribution of this thesis to the discussion is in the methodological experimentation and in the fieldwork that was done with the participants. Doing participatory research with young people has placed theorization in its place: it has important value in conceptualizing human (and non-human) life, but it also needs to listen to this life. Life needs to be able to speak back. For social science research to be truly multidirectional and effective, it needs to be in touch with worlds of the people whose life is being researched. Only then it is possible to understand that the world is not quite as fluid as many non-representational thinkers would like it to be: prevailing power-geometries structure what is possible in a given event, for instance while hanging out at a shopping mall.

Sometimes conditions of employment and research funding push us to design research that looks good on paper. We, as researchers, know which consent forms need to be filled in to do 'ethical research' and what a good application entails. We know how to draw charts and describe methods that are assumed to produce knowledge that can be *applied* in useful ways. This knowledge needs to be verbalized in an academic language, since language dominates the practice of doing research and our understandings of knowing. But, what if we did not only care about the usefulness of 'data-as-evidence', what if our primary motivation was to create better worlds through academic action? In this case, we would need to reclaim the status of basic research. And in doing so, we should aim for more experimentation with the world in order to let life 'speak

back'. As in feminist and participatory research practice, ethical decision-making has to eventually happen *in situ*. Guidelines are important, but they are not enough (or they are too much). But, also the research process itself should be genuinely open to what emerges and the aim should be to generate more questions/questioning, rather than complete explanations. Postqualitative enquiry encourages us to view knowing as entangled with everything that is going on: the prevailing power-structures and ideas, but also with countless other things taking place in an event. Thinking happens in the process of creating data and in every encounter of reading it. This understanding grants agency to matter. Further, rather than attending to language as a representation of some reality 'out there', words are understood as 'doings'. Words are actions amidst other actions. And it is from the encounters of bodies (human and non-human) and/or ideas that new thinking emerges. Research data, then, takes part in keeping the research process going. Data may not provide answers as 'evidence of the world', but it is much needed food for the researcher's thought.

This research has been bountiful in encounters. Through these, I have learned about doing research, about doing methods and theories, about engaging with teenagers, about Helsinki, San Francisco, and about hanging out, dwelling with, enchantment and knowing. The list goes on. And, I believe that learning has taken place within the encounters of young people and their home cities, in their experiments and in our talks together. This learning has been practical, but very much connected to what the young people studied during the geography course and discussed with each other, their teacher and me, as well as to other experiences in their life. My understandings of the fieldwork are linked to things I have read and discussed, and to the concepts I have been thinking with. Albeit theory driven, this research has been a process of struggling to conceptualize life *with* life. Again, action and understanding cannot be separated. Most importantly, I believe this learning could not have happened within a rigid research plan of prescribed order of thought and practices that would have prohibited the experimental and playful atmosphere of the process. In the end, I did not 'do' fieldwork — rather the field, together with the participants, and everything I read and encountered, 'did' the study, and me.

Rather than a process of gathering data, fieldwork can be understood as a series of events in which the researcher and the participants are re-creating the world. The 'voices' formed in the process have productive power: even if not treated as evidence of young people's lives, these voices matter. Encounters with all the participants, even with the ones who were eventually not so interested in taking part in the research,

pushed me to think and pose new questions — or rather, the questions imposed themselves on me. Changes in directions brought with them new understandings. Moments of exhaustion or enchantment forced me to think, they opened new doors. Although I cannot know, I was left with a feeling that this research mattered to most young people involved. This was expressed in many ways — sometimes with hearts or smiley faces on a paper, sometimes with laughter and hugs, sometimes tears. Hopefully the participants will continue to remember that an adult was interested in what they do and think. Hopefully the feeling will resonate to other encounters in their life. For me, despite the difficulties, this has been a joyous process of dwelling, participation and learning. It is not only the research that has taken new turns, but also I have changed during the process. New questions about hanging out often relate to other questions about life. And this is what is the best part of doing research: it makes you look at everything with new eyes, it opens up new worlds, new possibilities and therefore adds to making life a fascinating journey.

Yet, doing research in a new way does not mean that the lessons learned from what has been done before need to be abandoned. While paying more attention to the taking place of the geographies of hanging out, it has been important to keep in mind the forces and affectual atmospheres that frame this everyday phenomenon. Participatory research with young people has to happen with an acknowledgement of the structural limitations of their everyday lives. These have to do with young people's restricted mobility in public space, with increased adult supervision and control, policies and practices in public space that aim to plan young people 'out', with dominant ideas of life as a (personal) project, and with global market forces and the seductiveness of consumerism. Therefore, research on hanging out as dwelling with everyday spaces has also dealt with these questions, and more non-representational research is needed to further probe these forces at work.

While hanging out, young people generally do not have fixed plans for any productive 'activities'. Still, when asked about their hanging out, the girls often told me that they 'go shopping' to justify spending time at a shopping mall. The concept of 'hanging out' sometimes brought to surface ambivalent feelings. I argue that this tells more about the dominant discourse of talking about any action/non-action as 'useful' or 'purposeful' than it does about young people's ways of being while hanging out. From our encounters, I was left with the understanding that hanging out is mostly about being together, playing with things and having fun: it is a playful event. While hanging out, young people 'actively do nothing' and are then open to the new and unpredictable. Therefore, this study is an argument for the importance of the fleeting

everyday practices of hanging out, for just being with friends and being playful. Especially hanging out at a shopping mall is often labeled negatively as useless, superficial and girlish, and it is talked about in a condescending manner. Although hanging out at the mall is usually not just about shopping, it is not always criticism of commercialism either. And it does not have to be. It can be both and more, and important as such. And, friendship and care for friends can also foster care for others. Joyous feelings in hanging out can deepen one's engagement with the world, since forming a creative relationship with one's surroundings clears space for the inspiring experience of enchantment, which in turn can push one see the world anew: to re-cognize it.

This spatial-embodied thinking that happens in encounters with the world is what I have conceptualized as *hanging out -knowing*. This process is non-instrumental: it is material-discursive, multisensory reflection about one's place in the world and about the negotiations that take place in everyday life. It becomes possible via dwelling with the world. New understandings are produced through the self-feeding cycle of 'dwelling with – enchantment – reflection'. This conceptualization has significant consequences on how we approach education, since it sketches learning to be much more than an individual business. Instead, learning emerges relationally and multidirectionally in events where sensing and reflection happen with both the human and non-human world.

Conceptualizing learning as a more-than-human issue is an argument against the instrumentality and commodification of education, since nothing radically new can emerge within a strict order. It is an argument against the mania of assessing individual student performance. Because learning takes place with the world, and much of it is non-verbal and goes on unnoticed, it cannot be measured by tests such as the PISA<sup>1</sup> survey. Schools are an elemental part of societies, they are entangled with young people's free time and other spheres of life that, in turn, also take part in formal learning. It is then important that young people's everyday experiences and knowledges are recognized and reflected upon at school. With the help of creative methods, projects such as the 'Geographies of hanging out' can provide young people valuable means to tap on their everyday spatial-embodied knowledges, to question the prevailing circumstances, re-imagine the world, and carve space for difference. This supports inclusion at school. Cultivating feelings of playfulness in the classroom can reduce the fear of failure, foster experimentation and inspire new associations, also in connection to more traditional ways of learning. This engagement may open up new *pedagogical spaces of enchantment*.



To understand hanging out, I have tried to pay attention to *how* girls engage with spaces that are important to them, rather than to *what* they specifically say about hanging out. Obviously this has not been an easy task. While hanging out, young people are affectively engaged with their environments. The affective relations and intensities that have to do with hanging out can best be approached with artistic methods, and therefore these should be experimented with further. In his interview, Thrift encourages researchers to get involved with performing arts, because they offer a means for entering places people 'never thought they'd get' (Thrift et al. 2010, 196). Participatory methods have served as tools for probing these affectual geographies of bodily movement and practical association. They have provided a means to encounter young people as co-researchers. Especially photography and mental mapping proved to be rewarding methods for opening up new thinking through active engagement with spaces. By re-visualizing their home cities, young people created new cities. Even if these were imaginary and momentary, they inspired young people to re-cognize the world. Some of the images are represented in this work, and they still have productive power: they have a capacity to affect and thus take part in this research.

Even though the photo-walks and mental mapping functioned well in this study, this research has also shown that the qualitative methods that are customary in participatory research are often not experimental enough to address the ontological issues and affective relations that have to do with the fleeting everyday life. These methods have provided the participants with creative means to engage with their cities in new ways and to rearrange the knowledge they already had. This has been a valuable, and in the school context, also a realistic undertaking. But for more open-ended experimentation with urban space, the scope of methods should be broadened. This could mean improvisation with the city in the form of sound- and scent-walks, audiovisual experiments, and role-plays, in which creation of events happens in the moment. Artistic interventions have the potential to make people reflect on their everyday practices: to re-cognize the city. As Amin & Thrift (2002, 156) note, 'cities can be key sites in testing new ground'. Trying on new roles and *being otherwise* with the city will allow for surprises and changes of direction that can generate new associations.

While hanging out, young people are open to imaginative engagement with urban space. Through small and momentary practices, young people participate in the public sphere and often disturb taken-for-granted routines of everyday life. Hanging out and being playful at the shopping mall blurs the boundaries of public and private. Hanging out is an event of slower (or different) rhythm during which the neoliberalist push to

consume and move on can be momentarily questioned. By doing so, young people appropriate space and build temporary 'hangout homes' for themselves. *Counter-politics of affect* emerges from this momentary building. The feeling that a place is *our* place comes from being meaningfully engaged with it, from dwelling with it. Consequently, young people should have more time and space to 'actively do nothing'. Not only is that important *per se*, but drifting without a clear destination creates openings for moments of enchantment and thinking. Hanging out produces alternative modes of involvement with the city. Creative experimentation cultivates lively and convivial public spaces, and adds to making urban life surprising and thought-provoking. Without this, there is a danger of creating pleasant communities at the expense of accessible public spaces.

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